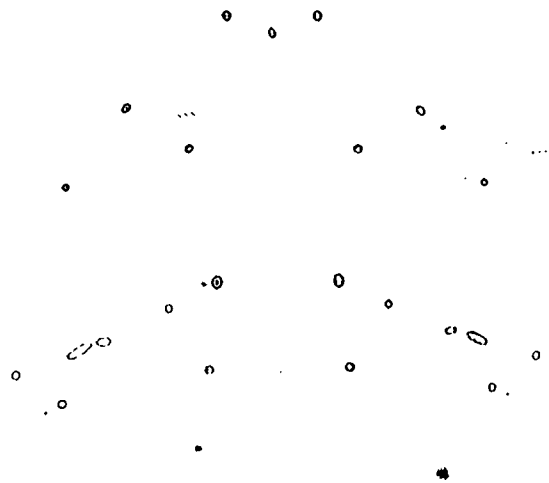

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LIFE OF WILBERFORCE.



TABULAR VIEW OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

1772.	1773.	1780-1.	1783.	1784.	1785.	1786.	1787.	1788.	1789-90.	1791.
Slavery proved illegal in England, by Granville Sharpe.	William Wilberforce writes against the Slave Trade from Pocklington school.	William Wilberforce writes to J. Gordon, to collect information for him in Antigua.	Bishop Portens preaches against the Slave Trade before the Propagation Society.	Reverend J. Ramsay publishes his Essay on the Treatment of Slaves.	Dr. Peckard proposes the Slave Trade as the subject for an Essay at Cambridge. The prize is gained by Thomas Clarkson.	Sir Charles Middleton requests Wilberforce to move for Abolition.	Wilberforce avows his design of procuring for Abolition. Abolition Committee formed. Thomas Clarkson employed to collect evidence.	Middle Passage Bill.	Examination of evidence, and motions in parliament.	Sierra Leone Company formed.

1792.	1793.	1794.	1795.	1796.	1797.	1798.	1799.	1800-1.	1802.	1803.
Dundas's Resolutions. Abolition carried in Commons for 1796.	House of Commons refuses to confirm its vote of preceding year. Foreign Slave Trade Bill rejected.	Foreign Slave Trade Bill passes Commons, but is lost in Lords.	Motion for Abolition rejected in the Commons by an increased majority.	Motion for Abolition introduced, but lost on the third reading.	The new parliament adopts Mr. Ellis's plan of leaving the question to the colonists. Motion for Abolition again lost.	Annual motion for Abolition again defeated.	Annual motion for Abolition again lost. Slave Trade Limitation Bill carried in Commons.	Motion for Abolition deferred, in expectation of a general Convention of European Powers.	Assignment of lands in Trinidad opposed. Annual motion for Abolition renewed. James Stephen publishes his "Crisis of the Sugar Colonies."	Annual motion postponed in consequence of the excitement of the expected invasion.

During these years the Abolition of the Slave Trade is prevented by appeals to the dread of Jacobinism. At length as the French Republic expires the cause of Abolition begins again to revive.

1804.	1805.	1806.	1807.	1808.	1810.	1811.	1812.	1813.	1814.	1815.
Abolition carried in Commons.	Order in Council extinguishes Trade to New Colonies.	Abolition again carried in Commons. Foreign Slave Trade abolished.	British Slave Trade abolished. Sierra Leone Company dissolved, and settlement given up to Government. African Institution formed.	North American Slave Trade terminated.	The new government at Venezuela abolishes Slave Trade.	Slave Trade made a felony by Great Britain. Portugal renounces Trade out of her own territory. Chili abolishes.	Buenos Ayres abolishes.	Sweden abolishes.	Denmark and Holland abolish. France promises to abolish entirely in five years, and immediately to the south of Cape Formosa; Spain promises to abolish in eight years.	France abolishes. Portugal, on receiving a sum of money, abolishes to the north of the equator, and intimates that she will finally abolish in eight years.

1816.	1817.	1818.	1820.	1822.	1823.	1824.	1825—8.	1829.	1833.
Slaves in Ceylon emancipated.	Right of search conceded by Portugal and Spain. Spain on receiving a sum of money promises total Abolition in 1829, and Portugal to the north of the equator.	Holland concedes right of search.	Slave Trade declared to be piracy by Great Britain; is a treaty with the Arabs on the Red Sea; And, by the United States.	The Spanish Cortes prohibits the Slave Trade.	Slave Trade being abolished by law as far as the influence of England extends, Wilberforce publishes his "Appeal" against Slavery. Motion for emancipation. Canning's resolutions. Anti-Slavery Society formed.	Slave Trade made piracy by Great Britain.	Colonial Legislatures in vain urged to mitigate Slavery.	Series of petitions against Slavery. Great meeting of Abolitionists in London, Wilberforce presiding.	Bill for Emancipating Slaves carried.

During this time an illicit Slave Trade is carried on, chiefly by France, Spain, and Portugal.

(To be inserted in Vol. II.)

THE

LIFE

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OF

XX.e 2

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

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ac

BY HIS SONS,

ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M. A.

VICAR OF EAST FARLEIGH, LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE;

AND

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M. A.

RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Happy is the state
In which ye, father, here do dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate
From all the tempests of these worldly seas.

SPENCER.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, BUNGAY.

ERRATA.

VOL. II.

PAGE	LINE	
52,	19,	*for* Montague *read* Montagu
225,	27,	*for* Rennie *read* Rennel
254,	12,	*for* 9 *read* 19
309,	16,	*for* 1801 *read* 1802
329,	2,	*for* Hatsel *read* Hatsell
428,	1,	*for* that with *read* with that
453,	34,	*for* Party. Association *read* Party association

THE

LIFE OF WILBERFORCE.

CHAPTER X.

DECEMBER 1792 TO JULY 1794.

Alarming aspect of the times—Revolutionary principles—Wilberforce anxious to prevent war—Attends East-Riding meeting—His first great difference with Pitt—Motion for Abolition lost in the Commons—Unpromising aspect of the cause—Plan of national religious instruction for India—Adjournment—His habits in society—Correspondence with Clarkson—Visits—Return to town in December—Foreign Slave Bill—Subscription for Clarkson—Visit to Portsmouth.

THE autumn of 1792 set in with heavy clouds darkening the political horizon. "Heard of the militia being called out, and parliament summoned—talked politics, and of the state of the country, which seems very critical."[1] Upon the 5th "left Rothley Temple, and after talking with Mr. Robinson (of Leicester) upon the state of the times, I travelled on to Newport

[1] Diary. Dec. 3.

Pagnell. Thursday 6th. Arrived in town and alighted at Pitt's."

None but those who were altogether blinded by the violence of party spirit could contemplate without alarm the troubled aspect of the times. The democratical excitement which the revolutionary fever of our continental neighbours had imparted to a portion of our own population, had been eagerly fostered by artful and disaffected men, and was ready in many places to break out into absolute rebellion.

"I cannot omit," writes Mr. Wyvill, "to communicate to you by the earliest opportunity what I have heard since I came here concerning the disposition of the lower people in the county of Durham. Considerable numbers in Bernard Castle have manifested disaffection to the constitution, and the words, 'No King,' 'Liberty,' and 'Equality,' have been written there upon the Market Cross. During the late disturbances amongst the keelmen at Shields and Sunderland, General Lambton was thus addressed: 'Have you read this little work of Tom Paine's.' 'No.' 'Then read it—we like it much. You have a great estate, General; we shall soon divide it amongst us.' 'You will presently spend it in liquor, and what will you do then?' 'Why then, General, we will divide again.'" "At Carlisle," writes Dr. Milner, "we had many reports concerning tumults and sedition, and the affair seemed to be of considerable magnitude. Some few gentlemen I understand are disposed to favour French principles, and I am exceedingly sorry to find

that Mr. Paley is as loose in his politics as he is in his religion. He has considerable influence in promoting this sort of work by his conversation, which has a strong tendency to destroy all subordination, and bring rulers of every description into contempt. He is naturally very good tempered, and my stay there was short. These two circumstances alone prevented our coming to a rupture. I have given myself little or no concern about politics for years, but of late the aspect has been so black that I could not help attending to our future prospects with some anxiety. Supposing Fox *to oppose,* I think it is well at this critical moment that he has gone so far. There is scarce one of his old friends here at Cambridge who is not disposed to give him up; and most say that he is mad. I think of him much as I always did: I still doubt whether he has bad principles, but I think it pretty plain he has none; and I suppose he is ready for whatever turns up. The tide at present seems setting strongly in support of government amongst all ranks. I believe this arises in great measure from the alarm of the moment; and when that is over, or abates, I fear the democratic principles will be found to have firmer roots."

The same apprehensions were excited amongst sober-minded men in all parts of the country. "Immense pains," he heard from Leeds,[2] "are now taken to make the lower class of people discontented, and to excite rebellion. Paine's mischievous work on

[2] Letter from W. Hey Esq.

'the Rights of Man,' is compressed into a sixpenny pamphlet, and is sold and given away in profusion. One merchant in this town ordered two hundred of them to be given at his expense: you may see them in the houses of our journeymen cloth-dressers. The soldiers are every where tampered with; no pains are spared to render this island a scene of confusion."

All this was sufficiently alarming; while the danger was increased by the probability of a French war, which must necessarily add to the burdens of the people, and so further the designs of the revolutionary faction. With his eyes fully open to these evils, he took a calm and sober view of the amount of danger.

"To you," he tells Mr. Hey, "I will frankly own, that I entertain rather gloomy apprehensions concerning the state of this country. Not that I fear any speedy commotion; of this I own I see no danger. Almost every man of property in the kingdom is of course the friend of civil order, and if a few mad-headed professors of liberty and equality were to attempt to bring their theories into practice, they would be crushed in an instant. But yet I do foresee a gathering storm, and I cannot help fearing that a country which, like this, has so long been blessed beyond all example with every spiritual and temporal good, will incur those judgments of an incensed God, which in the prophets are so often denounced against those who forget the Author of all their mercies." "Your letter," he writes again in answer to a detail of facts, "and accounts I have received of the state of

other places, have convinced me that there is more cause for alarm than I had apprehended. From my situation I feel loaded with responsibility. I am considering, and shall consider diligently, what is best to be done; and I pray God to give me wisdom to discern, and courage and perseverance to walk in the path of duty. I own to you that what throws the deepest gloom over my prospects is the prevailing profligacy of the times, and above all, that self-sufficiency, and proud and ungrateful forgetfulness of God, which is so general in the higher ranks of life. I think of proposing to the Archbishop of Canterbury to suggest the appointment of a day of fasting and humiliation."

The same sober estimate of present appearances, led him to check the exultation with which Mr. Hey regarded a temporary burst of loyalty in the town of Leeds. "'God save the King' was sung, with a chorus of three cheers after each verse, by the whole meeting, the most numerous I ever saw upon any such public occasion; about 3000 in number. The populace paraded the streets until night came on, carrying an image of Tom Paine upon a pole, with a rope round his neck which was held by a man behind, who continually lashed the effigy with a carter's whip. The effigy was at last burned in the market-place, the market-bell tolling slowly.* I never saw so quiet a mob; a smile sat on every face; the people went peaceably home; no outrage, no opprobrious language, but 'God save the King' resounded in the streets.

A happy change in this town."[3] "I rejoice to hear that so much unanimity prevailed at Leeds," was Mr. Wilberforce's answer, "but I do not build much on such hasty effusions: this one word in reply to yours."

Parliament met upon the 13th of December, when the Address upon the King's Speech, which Mr. Fox opposed and Mr. Windham defended, expressed a strong desire of maintaining peace. "I had thought much upon it, yet found myself indisposed for speaking."[4] But upon the following day, on the debate upon Mr. Fox's amendment to the Address, he declared his opinions. "War," he said, "he considered at all times the greatest of human evils, and never more pregnant with injury than at the present moment; but he supported the Address, as the most likely means of preserving peace."

This was now his great object. "I depend much," writes Mr. Wyvill to him, "upon Mr. Pitt's wisdom, but more upon your friendly and seasonable counsels, to prevent extremities." He was himself convinced that Mr. Pitt was honestly pursuing the same policy. "That there is no solid ground," is his deliberate judgment,[5] "for the charge that has been brought against Mr. Pitt, that some time before the war broke out he had been contemplating and wishing to commence hostilities, must be manifest to every unprejudiced mind that will fairly consider his speech in the preceding month of

[3] Letter from W. Hey Esq.

[4] Diary.

[5] MS. Mem.

May. When taking off some taxes, he intimated that he hoped to be able to propose a similar remission of the burdens of the country in every succeeding year. He declared that though no prudent man durst presume to predict the future circumstances of the country with anything like positiveness, yet that he might venture to affirm that the continuance of peace for sixteen years, had never been more probable than it was at that moment. Had he then formed but the slightest idea that it would be advisable for him to join the other continental towns in their war against the French, he would have taken such an opportunity as was afforded him by the general view he was giving of the situation of the country, for preparing the public mind for the intended measures. He would have endeavoured to impress on them a sense of the danger to be apprehended from the encroaching spirit of France. His language however was precisely of an opposite character."

"There is, I think," he wrote to the author of Jasper Wilson's letter, "one radical error which runs through your pamphlet: that I mean of imputing to Mr. Pitt a war system; as if it were his plan, his wish, his predilection, to engage in war, and that he had set himself to consider how he could effect his purpose. In point of fact great political events are rarely the offspring of cool, deliberate system: they receive their shape, size, and colour, and the date of their existence, from a thousand causes which could hardly have been foreseen, and in the production of which, various un-

connected and jarring parties have combined and assisted."

Throughout the warm debates with which this session commenced, he was constantly at his post; watching every opportunity to promote the continuance of peace. "Dec. 18th. Fox's motion about ambassador to France—he very strong. 19th and 20th. House again. 21st. Gave up the idea of a motion about the French King's fate. House of Lords in the evening—saw strong French decree, and 'Je suis Athée.'" Yet though thus anxious to prevent a war, no one could hold in more deliberate abhorrence the principles of the Revolution party. "Dec. 26th. A letter came from Mr. Clarke, announcing the intended East Riding meeting for the counteraction of French opinions. Took it into consideration and determined to set off immediately in order to attend it. Got off at three o'clock—overtook Duncombe, Milnes, and Burgh at Biggleswade—slept at Eaton. On Thursday got to Barnby Moor, and on Friday night to Beverley—occupied all the way in preparing to make a long speech, which proved all labour thrown away. Saturday. The meeting went off quietly. Gentlemen numerous—they and the people pleased with my appearing. I spoke for about five minutes; and hardly could more without appearing to *show off*, at least I thought so then, though now I believe I had better have held forth for half an hour."

But his hostility to French principles did not lead him to abandon the opinions he had always

held upon the necessity of reform in parliament. After this very meeting, he joined Mr. Wyvill, the professed champion of parliamentary reform, at the house of his colleague Henry Duncombe. "Jan. 2nd. Got off betimes—the horses fell, and the carriage broke near York. Through God's mercy I was unhurt, and arrived safe at Copgrove by night-fall. 3rd. Wyvill came to dinner—affectionate, well-intentioned, and kind—well-founded I think in the measures of reform he recommends, though excessive in his ideas of danger—chatted all the evening and most of the next day." The reasons which led him, unlike Mr. Pitt, to maintain even in this hour of danger the expediency of his former views, would require, he tells Mr. Hey a strong opponent of reform, too much space "to be discussed here; yet thus much I will say, that though considering the case of such persons as have actually imbibed the republican notions as altogether desperate, and of consequence, though I would not for the sake of bringing them back by fair means deviate a hair's breadth from the line I should otherwise pursue, yet I look upon all moderate reformers, who are sincerely attached to our present constitution of King, Lords, and Commons, with a very different eye, and should think it right to pay great regard to them, and to the object of bringing them to act cordially for the constitution, and against the republicans. Unless some reforms be made, though we should get well through our present difficulties, they will recur hereafter with aggravated force."

By the 16th of January he was again in the neighbourhood of London; and on the 21st "came to Wimbledon (Mr. Dundas's) by Pitt's invitation, to be alone with Pitt, Dundas, and Scott—instead found a strange mixed party. 22nd. Going away because Lord Loughborough coming, but on the whole thought it best to stay, considering that he is about to be made chancellor." The question of peace or war was now becoming highly critical. "Dined at Lord Elgin's—Lord St. Helen's, Bishop of Lincoln, Mrs. Carter, &c. Elgin and Lord St. Helen's seem to *think* against war, though averse to oppose the wishes of government."[6] The war which broke out almost immediately, led to the first decided political separation between himself and Mr. Pitt. It was not without great reluctance that he brought himself to oppose a minister, of whose integrity and talents he had so high a value, and with whom he had so long lived upon terms of the most intimate private friendship. The difference between them arose gradually, and did not ripen into open separation until the end of the following year; yet even from the beginning of the war he was not fully satisfied with the conduct of administration. Though Mr. Pitt's was not a "war system," yet he was in Mr. Wilberforce's judgment too much guided in its commencement by his own sanguine disposition, hitherto untempered by any disappointment. "It will be a very short war," said Mr. Pitt and his friends, "and certainly ended in one or two campaigns." "No, sir,"

[6] Diary, Jan. 28.

said Mr. Burke when this language was addressed to him, "it will be a long war, and a dangerous war, but it must be undertaken." Mr. Wilberforce was alive to its perils, but not convinced of its necessity. "Not that," he thought,[7] "peace could be a state of as much security as the term 'peace' had commonly implied, but as far the less of two evils. Though at the commencement of the war I could deliberately declare that we were not the assailants, and therefore that it was just and necessary; yet I had but too much reason to know that the ministry had not taken due pains to prevent its breaking out." In the debate therefore upon the King's message,[8] which intimated the necessity of some military preparations in consequence of the murder of the King of France, he had resolved to declare his persuasion that it was the true policy of this country to continue strictly upon the defensive; that the delirium which now distracted France would probably pass over by degrees, and that she would then see the folly of provoking a war with Great Britain, in addition to the continental storm which was already gathered round her. "I was actually upon my legs to open my mind fully upon the subject, when Pitt sent Bankes to me, earnestly desiring me not to do so that day, assuring me that my speaking then might do irreparable mischief, and pledging himself that I should have another opportunity before war should be declared." "House on King's message—sadly distressed—on my legs to speak against

[7] Letter to W. Hey, Feb. 14, 1801. [8] Feb. 1.

the Address, when stopped by Bankes, and note and assurance from Pitt. Sat very late, and much disturbed afterwards."[9] "Feb. 4th. Navy voted—embargo laid by France—nothing said. 5th. Pitt's on politics—discussing—Ryder, Steele, and Mornington—till ten at night—they too violent. 10th, Sunday. Sacrament—much affected—oh that it may be for good."

The week had passed away, and in spite of Mr. Pitt's assurance there had been no opportunity upon which he could state his sentiments. By an incident to which his whole parliamentary experience could furnish no parallel, the House was compelled to adjourn every successive day without entering upon other business, because there were not a sufficient number of members present to make a ballot for an election committee. Meanwhile war was declared by the French against England and the United Provinces, and when hostilities had actually begun, "I deemed it," he says, "the part of a good subject not to use language which might tend to prevent the unanimity which was so desirable at the outset of such a war."[10] Yet even now he was not satisfied with the tone held by the administration. "Feb. 12th. Message on the war—vexed at Pitt and Dundas for not being explicit enough."[11] "Our government," he wrote long after to Mr. Hey,[12] "had been for some months before the breaking out of the war negociating with the principal European powers, for the purpose of obtaining a joint representation to

[9] Diary. [10] MS. Mem. [11] Diary.
[12] Letter of Feb. 14, 1801, to W. Hey Esq.

France, assuring her that if she would formally engage to keep within her limits, and not molest her neighbours, she should be suffered to settle her own internal government and constitution without interference. I never was so earnest with Mr. Pitt on any other occasion, as I was in my entreaties before the war broke out, that he would declare openly in the House of Commons, that he had been, and then was, negociating this treaty. I urged on him that the declaration might possibly produce an immediate effect in France, where it was manifest there prevailed an opinion that we were meditating some interference with their internal affairs, and the restoration of Louis to his throne. At all events, I hoped that in the first lucid interval, France would see how little reason there was for continuing the war with Great Britain; and, at least, the declaration must silence all but the most determined oppositionists in this country. How far this expectation would have been realized you may estimate by Mr. Fox's language, when Mr. Pitt, at my instance, did make the declaration last winter (1799). 'If,' he said, 'the right hon. gentleman had made the declaration now delivered, to France, as well as to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, I should have nothing more to say or to desire.'"

Yet while he condemned impartially the errors of the minister, he was ready to defend him from all unmerited censure. Thus, to the author of Jasper Wilson's letter, (Dr. Currie,) a work which he commends, "as exhibiting originality of thought and

force of expression, and solving finely the phænomena of revolutions," he writes shortly after this time, "I think that you have spoken very uncandidly of Mr. Pitt's motives and general principles of action. Now, I believe you will give me credit for not being an idolatrous admirer of Mr. Pitt, though bound to him in the bonds of private friendship. I will talk of him freely and impartially. Faults he has, as who is free from them? but I most solemnly assure you that I am convinced, if the flame of pure disinterested patriotism burns in any human bosom, it does in his. I am convinced, and that on long experience and close observation, that in order to benefit his country he would give up not situation merely, and emolument, but what in his case is much more, personal credit and reputation, though he knew that no human being would ever become acquainted with the sacrifice he should have made, and record the patriotic gift in the pages of history. I could run on here, but I will check myself: I will only add, that I never met with any man of talents who would so fairly discuss political measures, so honestly ask advice, and so impartially consider it. Believe me who am pretty well acquainted with our public men, that he has not his equal for integrity as well as ability in the 'primores' of either House of parliament. I am almost ashamed of having been drawn into this long panegyric, but I will not burn it; it is the language of the heart, and as such will be acceptable.

"Another point wherein I greatly differ from J. W.

is that of the degree of public danger from popular discontents last winter. This is too large a field to enter into here, but I must say I believe it to have been very great. You know as well as I, on how nice a point political affairs of the utmost magnitude often turn. The cry of the multitude is a given quantity which may be thrown into either scale, and though that into which it is cast will sink with rapidity, yet had it been cast into the other, the former had then kicked the beam. Go to the utmost summit of Mont Blanc, descend on one side and you will find yourself in Italy, on the other and you will be two hundred miles off by the side of the Lake of Geneva. I know no more common source of error in judging men for their political conduct than inattention, one way or other, to this consideration; we forget how long we balanced, how slowly we formed our opinion, and when it is formed we are apt to treat those who differ from us, as men who can have nothing to say for themselves. I cannot help saying, that much of what J. W. urges respecting the inexpediency of our entering into the war, may be viewed in this connexion, which it is enough to point out to you; I am sure your sagacity will discern the rest. But I must finish. I have scribbled on so fast, that I fear I shall hardly be intelligible, and I cannot expend so much eyesight as to read over what I have written."[13]

Now that the war had actually commenced, and

[13] Aug. 13.

circumstances had thus prevented his openly opposing Mr. Pitt, according to his general rule he supported the King's government whenever he was able. His mode of life was much what has been described in the preceding year. Retiring often to Clapham for solitude; "the very prospect of which, even for a single afternoon, evidently mends me, fixing and solemnizing my mind;"[14] and cultivating more and more the company of those who lived habitually in the fear of God, he maintained his usual intercourse with general society. "March 12th. Three ballots. So between the first and second gave a dinner to some of my older friends, Apsley, Villiers, F. North, Belgrave, &c.—a civil, friendly thing, at a moderate expense of time and money." "Mason dined with me. Burke's wild speech to Mason, about replacing the French clergy." "Dined at Pitt's before House—two ballots, and friends came over to my house for dinner between them." "Venn preached an excellent introductory sermon—I received the sacrament and had much serious reflection. Oh may it be for good! I renewed all my solemn resolves, and purpose to lay afresh my foundations." "Mr. Cecil came to dinner, and tête-à-tête with him; having sent away Burgh for that purpose, according to our social contract. Much pleased with Cecil—he is living like a Christian. Oh that I were like him!" "I have much the same confessions to make as heretofore, yet I hope, on the whole, I have of late read the Scrip-

[14] Diary.

tures with more attention, and preserved on my mind rather a more constant sense of God's presence. My chief faults to-day, amongst innumerable others, have been, a want of self-denial, too little real respect for the excellent of the earth, too few aspirations, impatience under provocation, and not sufficient kindness to my servants." "Expecting Muncaster, meaning serious discussion; when sent for by Henry Thornton to town, on the state of public credit, &c.—then to Pitt's with and for him. A sadly interrupted day." "To Battersea with the two Venns—they with me all day—profitable conversation—Venn talked of M. the backslider. Oh may I beware!"

Early in this year he was again occupied with the conduct of the Negro cause. The session of 1792 had closed the period which he has described as the first assault upon the Slave Trade. The effects of the new tactics so skilfully introduced by Mr. Dundas, were not slow in making themselves felt. No practical mitigation of the evil had been yet obtained, but in his Resolutions the indignation of the country had found a vent, and was rapidly subsiding into comparative indifference.

"It appears to me very likely," wrote Mr. Wilberforce[15] shortly after they had been carried, "notwithstanding all that Grenville and Pitt declare to the contrary, that the examination before the House of Lords may be protracted beyond the period of the next session. Bear in mind, that under all the favour-

[15] June 15, 1792, to Mr. Gisborne.

able circumstances of our late discussion it was as much as we could do to carry 1796, and that accounts of population differing from those on which Pitt argued will certainly be sent from Jamaica, or his reasonings opposed by evidence directly shaped to counteract them. Consider also that the public mind has been, at least till lately, vacant for our subject, but that we can no longer expect to retain quiet possession; not to mention that people who act from feeling more than principle will begin to nauseate a topic of which they hear so much."

These anticipations were soon verified. The decent delay afforded by the forms of the House of Lords was fatal to the progress of the question. The enthusiastic march of its ordinary supporters grew slow and heavy; the interest of the country manifestly flagged; the excitement of the revolutionary war distracted the attention of the volatile; the progress of French principles terrified the timid; the seed which had been so freely scattered by the revolutionary politics of some leading Abolitionists had sprung up into a plentiful harvest of suspicion. "I do not imagine," writes Mr. Clarke during this period, "that we could meet with twenty persons in Hull at present who would sign a petition, that are not republicans. People connect democratical principles with the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and will not hear it mentioned. This is I hear precisely the case in Norfolk." From Suffolk Capel Loft writes word, "Of collective applications in any shape I see not now any probability in this county,

though I well know what great numbers in it, and how respectably composed, were earnest for the Abolition: but a damp and odium has fallen on these "collective applications." In this state of public feeling the tactics of the Abolitionists were necessarily changed. Instead of appealing confidently as of old to the sympathies of the nation, they simply prolonged in parliament the almost hopeless contest;[16] whilst perpetual delays, small divisions, and incessant defeats tried the skill and patience of the leader in the conflict, and of those faithful followers in the House who still continued under arms.

Yet during this darkest period his courage never yielded, nor was his patient diligence relaxed. He was early at his post in the first session of 1793; and in order to hasten the proceedings of the Lords by a new vote of the lower House, moved, upon the 26th of February, the further consideration of the Abolition of the Trade. The principal opponent of the measure was Sir W. Young, whose appeal to recent observation was not lost upon the House; since in defiance of the claims of consistency and justice enforced by the eloquence of the mover, seconded by the seldom united arguments of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, it refused by a majority of eight votes to renew its own decision of the preceding year.

This defeat in the Commons was succeeded by a

[16] This period was passed by the London Committee in a state of torpid vitality. They met in 1794 seldom; in 1795, 96, and 97, but twice each year; and after that did not reassemble until May 23, 1804.

postponement of the business in the Lords; where the advocates for the trade in slaves were reinforced by the zealous and avowed support of a member of the royal family. The only favourable incident of the session was the decision of the Lords upon the 11th of April. The further adjournment of the question to that day six months had been moved by the eccentric Earl of Abingdon, in a speech remarkable only for its length and incoherent violence. The horrors of St. Domingo, of Jacobinism, and dissent, were alike invoked to influence the fears of the House; but Lord Grenville and Bishop Horsley reassured its resolution, and the motion of adjournment was withdrawn. This decision of the Peers Mr. Wilberforce reported to the London Committee as a circumstance favourable to their hopes. But the examination scarcely proceeded. The session closed when only seven witnesses had been summoned, while both in this and in the following year, all intermediate efforts to obtain their grand object were suspended in the Commons in expectation of the promised progress of the Lords.

It had always been one part of the tactics of his opponents to assert that Mr. Wilberforce grew weary of the cause. As early as 1790, he wrote to Dr. Currie in answer to this charge: "I cannot help expressing my surprise at its having been reported I had given up the business. I attended for the greater part of the last session the whole of every morning in the Committee of the House of Commons, receiving evidence; and we have printed, I believe, at least 1100

folio pages. In truth, the principles upon which I act in this business being those of religion, not of sensibility and personal feeling, can know no remission, and yield to no delay. I am confident of success, though I dare not say any thing positive as to the period of it." Amidst the disappointments of the succeeding years such rumours were naturally revived by those who could not comprehend his principles. He had indeed present encouragement in the mitigated sufferings which had followed the regulation of the middle passage, whereby the average loss of life fell from 14½ to 5¼ per cent. He had a loud call for continued exertion in the constant evasions of this very bill,[17] as well as in the undiminished horrors of the trade in Africa. Yet, in spite of these motives, some ardent supporters of the cause of humanity retired from the protracted contest. His ardour also might have cooled if he had not acted from higher motives than mere sensibility of feeling. "You have found, sir, in the House of Commons," writes Dr. Currie,[18] "human reason a more imperfect instrument than perhaps you expected; the heart of man a more callous thing than might have been supposed; you have been repeatedly defeated with every advantage of talents, eloquence, and virtue, on your side, and after a hard-won victory, are

[17] The captain was answerable for any breach of its regulations, but as he could not be detained, he constantly escaped as soon as he had brought his vessel into harbour, and the restrictions of the bill were thus successfully evaded.

[18] April 5.

at last likely to be deprived of success by the cunning and selfishness, as well as the ignorance, of your opponents. It is said, that at length you faint in your course; that tired of the obstacles which present themselves, and fearful of embarrassing the minister in his present difficulties, you are about to give up the cause of the poor African until a quieter season." "Though I cannot," he replies, "enter upon the topics contained in your letter, I must notice one of them; that, I mean, of my being supposed to be, as you delicately express it, fainting in my course. Nothing I assure you is further from the truth: it is one of those calumnies, for such I account it, to which every public man is exposed, and of which, though I have had a tolerable proportion, I cannot complain of having had more than my share. In the case of every question of political expediency, there appears to me room for the consideration of times and seasons. At one period, under one set of circumstances, it may be proper to push, at another, and in other circumstances, to withhold our efforts; but in the present instance, where the actual commission of guilt is in question, a man who *fears God* is not at liberty. Be persuaded then that I shall never make this grand cause the sport of caprice, or sacrifice it to motives of political convenience or personal feeling." "If," replies Dr. Currie, "you have still a hope of procuring an Abolition of the Slave Trade, it must be from your trust in God and not in man. The war will render

all attempts at discussing the subject vain; and strengthen the arguments against the Abolition long after you and I are mouldering in our graves."

All present attempts to carry a general vote of Abolition being thus suspended, Mr. Wilberforce proposed some restrictive regulations which might mitigate the present evils of the trade, and prepare for its entire suppression.

Upon the 14th of May he moved unsuccessfully for leave to bring in a bill which for a certain time should limit and regulate the importations into our own colonies. On the same evening he proposed the prohibition of the trade in slaves through which foreign colonies were supplied by British merchants. This motion he carried by a feeble majority of 41 to 34, but the bill which he brought in and long maintained against the vexatious opposition of incessant postponements, was lost at last upon its third reading.

These measures were planned and carried on in the midst of many interruptions. "Alas," he says,[19] "what a hurrying life I lead, with little time for serious reflection!" "Some serious thought this morning, and found the benefit of early rising, but it sadly wears my frame." The canal and other local business of his great county consumed much time. Sierra Leone was a constant source of trouble: the causes of unnumbered private clients pressed upon his scanty leisure, while the general business of the House called his attention to the conduct of the war, the trial of

[19] Journal, April 16.

Warren Hastings, and the question of reform in parliament. "May 6th.[20] Parliamentary reform day. Came from Clapham after dinner—sat late—up to speak in vain. 7th. Adjourned debate—up several times in vain to speak. Sat till half past four—282 to 41. Pitt capital, but rather too far for me. 8th. Fagged from late sitting—House—and Sierra Leone house. 9th. Hastings' trial day—so House late. 11th. Up early, but tired and weak—out on business all morning." "Dr. H. miserable before the House of Commons. Apsley's repartee—'Better one of Burke's speeches: as much abuse of French and more religion.'"

He was engaged at this time in another most important effort. The renewal of the East India Company's charter afforded him an opening for attempting to improve the moral state of our Asiatic fellow-subjects. Since the reign of Anne a deep indifference to such attempts had settled upon the mind of the nation: he now attempted to arouse it from this long lethargy. After having "studied the subject with strenuous and persevering diligence," and consulted long and earnestly with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Speaker, and his friend Charles Grant, he brought the question forward in the House of Commons upon the 14th of May, in the form of certain Resolutions, which were agreed to in committee, and entered on the Journals. These Resolutions pledged the House in general terms, to the "peculiar and bounden duty of promoting by all just and prudent

[20] Diary.

means, the religious improvement" of the native Indians. Two days afterwards he proposed specific resolutions for sending schoolmasters and chaplains throughout India. To these Mr. Dundas had promised his support. "May 15th. East Indian Resolutions in hand, and slave business, Lord Carhampton abusing me as a madman. 17th. Through God's help got the East Indian Resolutions in quietly. Sunday, 19th. Scott morning. Cecil afternoon. Called at Grant's—Miss More there. The hand of Providence was never more visible than in this East Indian affair. What cause have I for gratitude, and trust, and humiliation!" "My time is contracted and my eyes bad, yet I must record the grace and goodness of God in enabling me to be the instrument of carrying through the East Indian clauses. Never was His overruling providence more conspicuous than in the whole of this business. Oh let me remember that Judas was used as an instrument with the rest of the twelve disciples, and that many will say, 'Have we not prophesied in Thy name,' to whom He will answer, 'Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity.' This affair gives me fresh occasion to discover the pride of my own heart. How properly is Grant affected! yet let me take courage. It is of God's unmerited goodness that I am selected as the agent of usefulness. I see His overruling power. I go to adore His wisdom and goodness, to humble myself before Him, and to implore His forgiveness for Christ's sake. Amen."[21]

[21] Journal.

During some following days he was absent from London. Upon the 22nd he "returned from Salt Hill (Eton Montem) by the middle of the day. East Indian directors met and strongly reprobated my clauses." The effect of this opposition was soon seen in the altered tone which Mr. Dundas assumed. Upon "the 24th, House on the East India Bill: I argued as strongly as I could, but too much in my own strength." "It is not meant," he said, 'to break up by violence existing institutions, and force our faith upon the natives of India; but gravely, silently, and systematically to prepare the way for the gradual diffusion of religious truth. Fraud and violence are directly repugnant to the genius and spirit of our holy faith, and would frustrate all attempts for its diffusion... To reject this measure would be to declare to the world that we are friends to Christianity, not because it is a revelation from heaven, nor even because it is conducive to the happiness of man, but only because it is the established religion of this country. In India we take equal care of Hindooism; our enlarged minds disdain the narrow prejudices of the contracted vulgar; like the ancient philosophers, we are led by considerations of expediency to profess the popular faith, but we are happy in an opportunity of showing that we disbelieve it in our hearts and despise it in our judgments. Beware how this opinion goes abroad. Think not that the people of this land will long maintain a great church establishment from motives of mere political expediency. For myself, I

value our established church as the means of preserving for us and for our children the blessings of the true religion; and I well know that to spread such a notion would be to inflict on it a fatal stroke."

In spite of this appeal he lost all the practical part of the Resolutions he proposed. "My clauses thrown out—Dundas most false and double; but, poor fellow! much to be pitied." "The East India directors and proprietors," he tells Mr. Gisborne, "have triumphed —all my clauses were last night struck out on the third reading of the Bill, (with Dundas's consent!! this is *honour*,) and our territories in Hindostan, twenty millions of people included, are left in the undisturbed and peaceable possession, and committed to the providential protection of—Brama." "How mysterious, how humbling, are the dispensations of God's providence!" was his own private meditation.[22] "I see that I closed with speaking of the East India clauses being carried, of which I have now to record the defeat; thrown out on the third reading by a little tumult in the court of proprietors. Oh may not this have been because one so unworthy as I undertook this hallowed cause, (Uzzah and the ark,) and carried it on with so little true humility, faith, self-abasement and confidence in God through Christ? Yet where can I go but to the blessed Jesus, Thou hast the words of eternal life—I am no more worthy to be called Thy son; yet receive me, and deliver me from all my hinderances, and by the power of Thy renewing grace,

[22] Journal.

render me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

The general apathy with which his proposals were received, pained him deeply; while he especially complained that the bishops as a body gave him no support. Nor was it until he had thus fruitlessly attempted to rouse the nation and the church to their undoubted duty, that he turned, as a poor substitute, to voluntary associations. Yet something had been done. The assertion of the general duty of attempting to evangelize the East, barren as it was for twenty years, remained upon the Journals of the House, and contradicted publicly the profession of infidelity which was made this very year, in the person of our nation, at the court of China. "The English," declared Lord Macartney, "never attempt to disturb or dispute the worship or tenets of others, &c. . . they come to China with no such views . . they have no priests or chaplains with them, as have other European nations, &c."[23]

A few extracts from his Diary mark his chief employments for the remainder of the session. "25th May. African Association—Beaufoy's oasis, and Jupiter Ammon; hæ nugæ, &c. Dined at E.'s—rout afterwards—what extreme folly is all this! yet much entertained; perhaps too volatile. 27th. Brought in Foreign Slave Bill. 28th. Pitt's birth-day, 34.—House till late, then dined Dundas's, and up too late—Duke of Buccleugh, Grenville, Chatham, Mulgrave, Steele, Ryder, Rose, Bayham, Apsley, Eliot,

[23] Lord Macartney's Journal, Oct. 21, 1793.

Pitt. June 4th. To town—busy about Slave Bill—drawing room—then dined at Pitt's. 5th. Exceedingly hurried—Slave Bill in Committee; but put off again. 7th. Very busy again all day—then House till eleven. American guarantee of French islands. 12th. Foreign Slave Bill thrown out: less consequence because we could not have carried it through the Lords. Had written no notes to-day,[24] but relied on other business. 13th. Busy early—then Orleans Gallery, to which I have been going all the winter—then to Clapham, with Burgh, Thornton, and Hey—busy on Report of Reformation Society. 14th. To town to the annual meeting of the Proclamation Society. 18th. Slave Committee—anti-saccharism. Had intended to go to Bath and taken lodgings, but put it off to see about Dowlin's affair; on which very busy. 22nd. To Holwood with Pitt in his phaeton—early dinner and back to town. Discussion about Dowlin—religion—political character, &c. June 22nd till July 8th. Very busy about Dowlin's affair—reading over trials and drawing up a case, and pressing it in proper quarters. Dined one day at Dundas's. Lady—and great party. The conversation on natives of New South Wales, duels, &c. I felt strongly how little I was fit for these people, or they for me; ('What doest thou here, Elijah?') but I went upon Dowlin's affair. Next morning had a long discussion with Dundas about it; and on ecclesiastical establishments of England and Scotland, &c."

[24] To secure the attendance of friends.

Yet in all this continual employment he maintained a careful watch over his mind and spirit. "I have this day," is one of his Sunday's entries, "been commemorating the redeeming love of Christ. May this be to me the beginning of a new era."—"How hard do I find it to trust Christ for all! Yet this is that simple faith, that humble, child-like principle, which produces love, and peace, and joy. Oh let me seek it diligently whilst it is called to-day!"—"How much do I yet want of the enlarged philanthropy and purified affection (this consists in the love of holiness as such, and the hatred of sin as such in ourselves and others) of the real Christian. I have been mixing a little with worldly people: and their pursuits and cares and joys do indeed seem most contemptible; but it is not enough to see this, I should be filled also with the love of God and Christ, and of all mankind for His sake, with a fixed desire to please Him and do all for His glory."

At length upon the 9th of July he got free from London engagements, and set off for Bath. His journey was somewhat impeded by the unusual warmth of the weather, and the day after his arrival, finding the heat of Bath intense and being unable to get a country lodging, he wrote to Mrs. H. More:—

"My dear Madam,

After having been detained day after day for above a fortnight in or near London, I at length emerged with Mr. Venn on Tuesday last, and arrived

here yesterday afternoon. The heat is such as to render the Bath waters a potation as little suited to health as pleasure, and unless the weather change, we must withdraw from this roasting without and stewing within whilst we have strength to get away, and seek a more genial climate amongst the mountains of Wales. Meanwhile we cannot quit these parts without being gratified, and I hope profited, by a survey of your operations; and therefore we propose, if it be convenient, to be with you to-morrow evening. Both Mr. Venn and I prefer being witnesses of your Sunday lecture before your week-day conventicling. You must not engage a pulpit for him, as all his sermons are in his trunk and he does not extemporize before strangers; but if his trunk arrives in time, he will put one or two sermons in his pocket, and perhaps you could get a pulpit on short notice for the Rector of Clapham, M. A. though not for one of Miss Patty's lank-haired favourites. I am sure you will thank me for making you acquainted with so good and so agreeable a man.

I am always very sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Sat. July 13th. The heat still intense—thermometer 87½, and the air still more balmy. Left Bath in the afternoon, and reached Cowslip Green late. Sunday, 14th. Off betimes for 'the round' with Venn and two Miss Mores. He preached at Axbridge and Cheddar—wonderful scenes—God is with them. Walked in the evening amongst Cheddar rocks with

Venn, and home late. 15th and 16th. At Cowslip Green all day—the heat moderated. 17th. Left Miss More's early—on to old passage, where so cold that we had a fire. 15th. Crossed the Severn, and slept at Aust Ferry—weather cold. 19th. Sent Venn on "pony to Piercefield, and staid at Aust Ferry all day."

The next day he was established at Perry Mead, in the immediate neighbourhood of Bath, where he and Mr. Venn remained for about three weeks longer. Such society, and comparative retirement, he valued highly, and sought diligently to employ to his own improvement. "I have had," says his Diary, "Venn with me near a fortnight; he is heavenly-minded, and bent on his Master's work, affectionate to all around him, and above all to Christ's people, as such: how low are my attainments! Oh let me labour with redoubled diligence, to enter in at the strait gate. An indolent soothing religion will never support the soul in the hour of death; then nothing will buoy us up but the testimony of our conscience that we have fought the good fight. Help me, O Jesus, and by Thy Spirit cleanse me from my pollutions; give me a deeper abhorrence of sin; let me press forward. A thousand gracious assurances stand forth in Christ's gospel. I humbly pray to be enabled to attend more to my secret devotions; to pray over Scripture, to interlace thoughts of God and Christ, to be less volatile, more humble, and more bold for Christ. Sunday, Aug. 4th. Venn preached this morning at the Abbey church, where I had asked for the pulpit from

Dr. Phillott. I more interested for his credit, alas! than his usefulness."

During this stay at Bath, he began the execution of his long-cherished plan of addressing his countrymen on their estimate and practice of religious duty. "Saturday, Aug. 3rd," he says, "I laid the first timbers of my tract." The Diary of this autumn contains frequent notices of its continuance; and though it was almost four years more before its publication, it was from this beginning that his "Practical Christianity" arose.

"My dear Madam," he writes at this time to Mrs. H. More, "I have been designing to ask almost ever since I returned to Bath what books you have already given B., that I may know what to send him. I wish you would be kind enough to give some little gratuities for me to the teachers of such of the schools as I saw, and to any of the young people whom you may think it useful to distinguish; this little notice may animate and spur them on, and we all want such enliveners. Be kind enough to let me know how much you dispose of, that I may repay you. I rather think I shall go over to R. next week, having a very kind invitation; can you give me any hints which might be useful in directing me there. Is Lady T. or are any of the daughters at all seriously inclined, and which?

I am ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Aug. 14th. After dinner I set off for R. where I

got at nine, but made nothing of it the first night. 18th. The ladies all good-natured, but alas, I made nothing of it. Some talk with Y. but he not serious, and I perhaps too timid. I think Lady Y. has a feeling of religion. Music at night. How relaxing all this is to the mind!"

It was certainly a peculiar task to which he was called. His rare conversational talents, once so great a snare, were now regarded as a means of fulfilling those high functions for which Providence had marked him out. With this view he entered into society, and in it he possessed a talisman, which even when he failed in his purpose of doing good to others, kept his own spirit from the benumbing influence of the enchanted scenes which he visited. "I fear I made no hand of it at R." he tells Mrs. H. More; "nor do I think (to speak unaffectedly) that this was altogether my own fault, although I am fully sensible that I might have managed better. But though with Lord Y. I had some little serious conversation, (God grant that the seed may remain and spring up hereafter,) I had no opportunity of any such intercourse with the others; and I fear I seemed to them a gay, thoughtless being. My judgment prescribed cheerfulness; but perhaps my temper seduced me into volatility. How difficult it is to be merry and wise! yet I would hope that even by this gaiety, though somewhat excessive, a favourable entrance may have been provided for religious conversation, if any future opportunities of explanation should occur, as I think they will. You see how

honestly I open myself to you. But this is the result neither of vanity nor emptiness, but because I really wish you would perform that best office of friendship, advising me upon the subject in question, and telling me whether I ought or ought not to endeavour to adopt a more staid and serious demeanour. It is very useful for the regulation of our practice, to know how our conduct has been understood; and if it should come in your way to learn the impression produced by mine in the present instance, I should be glad to be made acquainted with it. I was at R. but two days, yet I declare to you I found the luxurious, dissipated way of going on so relaxing to my mind, that I felt it would have been dangerous to stay longer without a special call."

"Doubtful," he says at this time, "whether or not I ought to go to Windsor to-morrow to take the chance of getting into conversation with some of the royal family. Lady E. may afford me the opportunity. Also I may do good to N. and H. Yet I distrust myself; I fear my eye is not simple, nor supremely set on God's glory in this scheme. Perhaps I should do better to attend to my proper business, and this is Satan's artifice to draw me off. Yet on the other hand, if any good is done it is great. I will pray to God to direct me.—Thought over the Windsor scheme and resolved against it."

"How little, alas! in the six weeks that have elapsed since I left this place," says his Journal on his return to Battersea, "have I preserved a cordial love

of heavenly things, a true relish of their enjoyment, or a practical sense of their value. This last week I hope upon the whole has gone on rather better;—that I have been more conversant with spiritual subjects and more earnest in prayer. Yet what proofs do I receive of my readiness to enter into the pleasures of dissipation when at such a house as Lord T.'s, where it does not shock me by the broad stamp of vice! Oh may I by God's grace learn to be spiritually-minded, relishing the things of the Spirit, living a diligent and self-denying life so far as regard to my weakly frame and social duties will allow."

Blaming himself for having been of late less diligent, he resumed his plan of noting down the exact expenditure of his time during the two months which he now spent at Battersea Rise. Here he describes himself as "reading Butler, Barrow, Soame Jenyns, and the Scriptures, and going on with tract, which I discussed with Cecil, who is now staying with me; he strongly recommends it. Let me not lose these opportunities of converse with such men as Venn and Cecil." "How many, how great, how almost unequalled," he says, on the recurrence of his birth-day, "have been my mercies! how many and how great my sins! The good things I enjoy, of God's providing; the evils I labour under, of my own. Let me press forward with all diligence, and may God for Christ's sake quicken me by His Spirit. I hope I have been more under the habitual fear of God, and yet how little do I live worthy of my high calling!

My time has been wasted; let me labour to improve the talents God has given me, and to use them for His glory."

Abolition business now occupied much of his attention. "Otley came to me and staid long discussing. I wished much to see him for Slave and connected purposes." To a friend whose zeal in this cause had been somewhat checked by the disgust with which he had heard of the revolutionary tenets avowed in the neighbouring town of Bradford by a leading Abolitionist, he writes, "I am half affronted by your manner in speaking of the Slave Trade, and if eyesight were as plentiful a commodity with me as the speaking faculty, I might scold you for it handsomely. However it is a subject upon which practically we can never disagree. When you read the Sierra Leone Report, you will find your old feelings respecting the Slave Trade refreshed. I cannot help considering this unjust and cruel traffic as a weight which at this moment lies heavy on this country, and which, with our conduct in the East Indies, may finally sink us, though long spared by the mercy and forbearance of God."

Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt had "confidently anticipated" that the House of Lords would enter diligently upon the examination of the evidence which they had demanded on the Slave Trade. For this examination it was of the greatest moment that the friends of Abolition should be well provided, and whilst there remained any prospect of it, he was diligent in making preparations.

Upon the 23rd of August he wrote to the governor of Sierra Leone, urging him to forward the information which the House of Lords required. "You must neither smile nor be angry," he says at the conclusion of a copious letter, "at my issuing these directions from the quiet and security of my country study. I am fully aware of all the difficulty and danger which may attend their execution; but as it is your part to act, so it is ours to speculate." The conduct of the Abolition question involved him at the same time in a less pleasing correspondence. It was no unusual thing for those who had rendered assistance to the cause he had so much at heart, to claim in return his good offices with the King's government. These he was always ready to exert when he could do so with propriety. But there were times when he was compelled by what was due to his own character to disappoint their expectations; and in these cases the conclusion of the matter sometimes wore no very amicable complexion. A single instance which occurred this year illustrates his command of temper in such circumstances.[25] Mr. Clarkson, whose devotion to the great cause of Abolition had been indefatigable, was desirous of procuring the promotion of his brother

[25] The reader is reminded here of what has been already said concerning the obligation incumbent upon the writers of this work, to exhibit the true character of Mr. Wilberforce in his various relations. It would better have accorded with their feelings to have suppressed this correspondence, and that which shortly follows; but they could not esteem themselves at liberty to withhold all mention of facts which throw so much light upon the connexion which existed between Mr. Clarkson and Mr. Wilberforce.

to the rank of captain in the navy through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce. That influence had been exerted as far as it could be used by an independent man, but had been ineffectual. Under these circumstances Mr. Clarkson addressed to him a letter of complaint, from which the following sentences are extracts:—

"My opinion is that my Lord Chatham has behaved to my brother in a very scandalous manner, and that your own timidity has been the occasion of his miscarrying in his promotion."

"I think Lord C. may be said to have acted scandalously, &c. . . Yet, after all, my opinion is that my brother's miscarriage is to be attributed to your own want of firmness. I can have no doubt but you have frequently written to my Lord Chatham, and this with singular zeal and warmth, on the subject, but you have not, I apprehend, waited on him often, or insisted on his promotion in strong language. He has told you of difficulties, and you have been satisfied; though other persons with infinitely less interest than yourself have got promotions the next day. Will you tell me that if you went to my Lord Chatham and insisted upon it, it would not be done? Will you say that if Lord C. said to the Lords of the Admiralty, 'There are many members of parliament who have this young man's promotion at heart,' that he could have been resisted? And yet you cannot command your point. I never will believe, but that your own want of firmness is the true reason why my brother has not succeeded before. You will observe that I give you

credit for having a great desire of serving him, and perhaps for having even expressed yourself by letter in his behalf in a stronger way than for any other man; but letters will not do, and unless personal applications be made you will not serve him."

To these solicitations Mr. Wilberforce replied.

TO THE REV. THOMAS CLARKSON.

"Dear Sir,

Your letter reached me when in the very act of leaving Bath; where, after paying a visit to a friend by the way, I arrived on Saturday evening. I find as usual an accumulation of packets, but yours claims the precedence; and I sit down to reply to it without delay. To say I have read it without emotion would be to go beyond the truth; but certain it is, that the perusal of it has moved me less than might perhaps have been expected. The fact is, I am used to such remonstrances. It is the mode wherein I am accustomed to be addressed by people who, having for themselves or their friends expected the favours of government in consequence of my solicitations, have had their too sanguine hopes disappointed or deferred: they always, like you, seem rather to approve of one's delicacy in the general, but claim a dispensation from it in their own particular instance. This is language against which a man must arm himself who is resolved to maintain his independence. I am always prepared to expect it, and though habit has not rendered me insensible to its selfishness, it makes me hear it without

surprise; and yet, to speak more correctly, I had thought you in a good degree exempt from this common infirmity, and from the esteem and affection I feel for you, it is not without regret that I discover my error. I am willing however to persuade myself that your tender solicitude for a beloved brother has beguiled you into the adoption of sentiments which in your cooler judgment you would be the first to condemn. I cannot argue the point with you at length, I have not leisure for this, and still less have I eyesight, for I need not say this is a letter wherein I cannot employ my amanuensis: but I will suggest those principles on which I rest the propriety of my conduct; principles which seem for once to have escaped your recollection.

"You acknowledge, 'you have no doubt of my having frequently written to my Lord Chatham, and this with singular zeal and warmth, on the subject.' Again, you 'give me credit for having a great desire for serving your brother, and perhaps for having even expressed myself by letter in his behalf in a stronger way than I have done for any other man:' but, 'I have not, you apprehend, waited upon him often on the subject, or insisted on his promotion in strong language.' 'It is my want of firmness which is the true reason why your brother has not succeeded before;' and, 'Will I tell you that if I had gone to Lord Chatham and insisted on it, it would not be done,' &c.

"Now need I enter into a regular argument to

prove the vicious nature of the principles on which all this proceeds? Principles which, however too much acted upon and even sometimes avowed in the world, I must fairly tell you I abhor, have ever disclaimed, and will resolutely and systematically oppose and discountenance. I think it really will be enough for you to read such sentences in the hand-writing of another person to become conscious of their real nature and character. If indeed you saw me proceeding in this way in other instances, if you saw me making favourite exceptions to my stricter rule, you might have reason to complain; but you must, or at least you may, know that the reverse is the fact, and that I have adhered, as I will continue to adhere, to my own system in the case of those with whom I am the most nearly connected, or who most warmly support me in my election struggles; . . a species of obligation this, which according to the plan of making one's political situation subservient to one's personal convenience, is held to convey a claim to a particular return. To your own mind let me appeal; I am warranted in so doing, not only by what I know of your general sentiments, but by what you say in this very letter, of your having been and your still being prevented from asking any favour of this sort, lest it should seem, if granted, to have the appearance of a reward for your own labours. Why are things thus to change their natures and their names accordingly as you or I are in question? Why is that, which is in you proper delicacy, timidity and want of firmness in me? Why are

you to have the monopoly of independence? Is it less valuable to me than you, and less deserving of regard, less suitable to my circumstances, less ornamental to my character, less essential to my usefulness? Considering all the peculiarities of my condition and fortunes, is not this general duty of a public man more urgent in mine than almost in any possible instance; and how criminal should I be, if I were to truck and barter away any personal influence I may possess with some of the members of administration, which ought to be preserved entire for opportunities of public service?

"But I will enlarge no further on this topic. Let me assure you however, that strongly as I have condemned some parts of your letter, I am obliged to you for the freedom with which you have spoken of my own conduct; and though you say, 'I shall not consider it as at all serving my brother's promotion,' I believe you do me the justice to think that it will not obstruct it; in truth I may make myself easy on this head, because had you not thought thus you would not have sent it, for it was not certainly to injure your brother's cause with me that you took up the pen, nor yet solely for the purpose of sowing dissensions between friends, or of wounding my feelings by an useless attack on the conduct of those with whom I was living in habits of intimacy. Be this as it may, my line is clear; I have, as you confess, your brother's promotion sincerely at heart, and I will exert myself for him as much as I think I ought, but I must neither be seduced

nor piqued into doing more. I will say no more. I hope I have not said too much: perhaps indeed I should have been less warm, if the attack had not been made on me in a quarter, where expecting only what was kind and affectionate, I had been the less armed against any thing of a hostile nature: but, I was prompted to write thus freely not only because I thought it due to my own character, but because I wished rather to discharge what was in my mind than to let it smother in silence, as being less likely to interrupt the cordiality of our connexion; for unfeignedly do I return your assurance of sincere esteem and regard. We have long acted together in the greatest cause which ever engaged the efforts of public men, and so I trust we shall continue to act with one heart and one hand, relieving our labours as hitherto with the comforts of social intercourse. And notwithstanding what you say of your irreconcileable hostility to the present administration, and of my bigoted attachment to them, I trust if our lives are spared, that after the favourite wish of our hearts has been gratified by the Abolition of the Slave Trade, there may still be many occasions on which we may co-operate for the glory of our Maker, and the improvement and happiness of our fellow-creatures.

I remain, my dear Sir,

very sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Battersea Rise, Aug. 19, 1793."

His neighbourhood to London during this period of the recess, enabled him to see more of Mr. Pitt than had been lately possible; and earnest were their discussions upon public business, now that the spirit of that great man had risen to the exigencies of those difficult times. "To town 14th of September to see Pitt—a great map spread out before him." "16th. To town on Admiralty business of my constituents. Dined tête-à-tête with Pitt—he disengaging himself to do so—much politics. Home at night. 18th. To town on business. Pitt asked me to dine with Lord G. Conway and grandees; I pondered and, approving, went—Dundas, Hawkesbury, Chatham, Grenville, Mornington, &c. Slept at Pitt's—he very kind. 28th. Felt a strong disposition to go to Wimbledon, where Pitt and Dundas are, but believing it vanity and idleness, resisted it. Oct. 11th. To town early. Pitt's on —'s affair—then long 'discussion (Elgin) about the war'—dined with him, and home at night. 14th. Off for Holwood. Pitt and I tête-à-tête—he very open, and we discussed much."

Even in his own severe judgment of himself, he deemed the greater opportunities of reflection now afforded him not wholly lost. "I am more seriously-minded I hope than formerly." "I hope I have gone on rather better, that my humiliation is now deeper, my seriousness more abiding, and that through God's grace my purposes of amendment will be more permanent. May God strengthen me for Christ's sake. Oh that by any means I might learn to

maintain a humble, watchful, self-denying, loving frame of mind; living above this world, looking forward to a better, and having here fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Upon the 22nd of October he left Battersea Rise to pay his annual visits at Yoxall Lodge and Rothley Temple; and during the two months which he spent between them, was principally occupied in preparing the materials for his work on 'Practical Christianity.' Fuller entries in his Journal mark this season of comparative leisure, and their altered tone shows in striking colours the increasing power of religion over his character.

"I feel," he says, "a deep conviction (mixed sometimes with vague doubts of Christianity altogether, not solidly formed objections; and I fly from them) that one thing is needful, and I humbly resolve to aim high. His strength is perfected in weakness. Oh tarry thou the Lord's leisure, &c. Labour and strive earnestly. How unreasonable would it be for me to expect, after having lived so long a lukewarm life, to experience at once the power and energy of religion. This scarcely ever happens. But God's promises in Christ are yea and amen. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." "I have been praying with seriousness, and considering that the promises of grace, and repentance, and a new heart, and strength, and peace, and joy in believing, are made to all that wait on God through Christ, and will be performed in spite of Satan's hinder-

unces. Oh may I be the temple of the Holy Ghost. With what shame do I discover my worldly heart desirous of gaining credit by my tract! I have been more diligent and self-denying lately: I have found this morning the advantages of a little religious solitude; (I have prayed three quarters of an hour, for myself, my country, and friends, &c.;) let me seize proper occasions for it, and not make my Sundays days of hurry: solitude seems to give me over as it were from worldly to spiritual things."

By the end of December, he was again established in the neighbourhood of town, and was soon obliged to lay aside his tract for the ordinary business of his London seasons. "Jan. 18th. Long political discussion with Pitt on the King's speech. 20th. To town to dinner with Duncombe to confer with him about politics—then called at Bankes'. 21st. To Grant's to prepare for debate, and be uninterrupted—House till very late. Feb. 3rd. House—Pitt uncommonly fine on armed nation, &c." Finding many hinderances to that "perfection," after which he longed, from the "troublous stage upon which I am now entering, I proceed," he says, "to frame a kind of plan for a journal of my interior and exterior conduct, on which I propose almost daily to examine myself with a view to progress in holiness, tenderness of conscience, and that watchfulness which my situation in life, so abundant in snares, particularly requires. This scheme is to be drawn up with a view to my most besetting sins and temptations." The results of these

times of self-examination are regularly recorded in a plan which extends through this and the five succeeding years; with such persevering diligence did he watch over his heart, and so strictly pains-taking and practical was his personal religion.

He was soon engaged in parliamentary attendance; and keeping aloof from party strife, regrets often "the violent work," and "acrimony of debate," which characterized that stormy period. Though he still supported administration, he was watching eagerly every opening for peace; and "witnessing with deep solicitude, and not without some gloomy anticipations, the progress of the war."[26] He was ever ready in his place to maintain the cause of morality and religion; and took commonly a leading part in all discussions bearing upon these points. In this year, he supported a bill brought in by Mr. Mainwaring for promoting a stricter observance of the Lord's day; and his Diary notices, upon this occasion, "Much sparring with Courtenay."

Early too in the session he was engaged in the Abolition contest; moving upon the 7th of February for leave to bring in a bill to suppress the Foreign Trade. Although this measure left unrestricted the supply of our own islands, and could not therefore impede their cultivation; yet against it was arrayed almost the whole force of the West Indian interest. From this opposition, headed by Sir William Young, must be honourably excepted the

[26] MS. Mem.

names of Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Barham, whose arguments however found no favour with their colonial brethren. Though the measure was described by an influential planter, in a letter to its mover, as "a compromise which ought to attach every West Indian to you, and induce them to support you in every future plan you may propose;" yet in every stage of its progress, it met with their determined opposition. "The continuance of the Foreign Slave Trade," argued one of its supporters, "is essential from its magnitude to the existence of the general trade." It is useless," continued another, "to abolish by legislation a trade which of itself has already actually ceased." This opposition was part of a system of general resistance to the interference of parliament with the arrangements of their private property.

"I do not dispute," wrote Mr. Dundas, whose support Mr. Wilberforce had endeavoured to secure by a private appeal, "that a great deal of very good reasoning can be offered on the principles you state; but I know with absolute certainty that the Bill will be considered by the colonies as an encroachment upon their legislative rights, and they will not submit to it unless compelled. Upon this ground I have used all the influence I possess to prevent any question on the subject being agitated, at least during the war. My opinion does not prevail, and therefore the only thing to which I can reconcile myself is being perfectly quiet on the subject; and even to that I should feel it very difficult to reconcile myself, if I did not

believe that your Bill will not pass the House of Lords."

With great personal labour Mr. Wilberforce succeeded in carrying the Bill through the House of Commons, after four divisions upon its three readings and recommitment. In the House of Lords on the second reading[27] it was abandoned by the ordinary friends of Abolition (Lord Stanhope alone remaining firm) to the assaults of Lord Abingdon and the Duke of Clarence, and the second reading was postponed till that day three months. Lord Grenville consented to defer this first instalment in humanity until the general measure should be adjusted. "He deems it, doubtless," writes Mr. Gisborne, "an 'excess of zeal.' I have not forgiven him that expression—I am excessively concerned at the decision. This in truth is honour, and a fair specimen of worldly-minded, political craft. I am the more disturbed, as I had not expected this blow after your original success, the extent of which had also amazed me. At all events you have done your part, and let us hope that in this, as in other instances which we can recollect, Providence will bring real good out of seeming evil." "As for my Foreign Slave Bill," writes Mr. Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster,[28] "I have, I confess, no hopes of its getting through the Lords, yet I do not relish its being suffered to lie upon the shelf, and therefore am half vexed at Grenville. However in all the disappointments of life of every kind, we must

[27] May 2. [28] April 5.

learn to say 'Thy will be done.' Every day's experience serves more fully to convince me how little we can foresee what is best for the success, even of our own measures."

The progress of the Lords in their examination of the general question could scarcely justify this deference. Upon the 10th of March they rejected a proposition made by Bishop Horsley for referring to a select committee the examination of the neglected witnesses. In the House at large the business was continually deferred; and it was not until the 6th of May, four days after the defeat of the Bill sent to them from the Commons, that they summoned to their bar a single witness: two only were examined, and the subject was entirely laid aside.

The prospect of affairs out of Parliament was not more encouraging. "The rising matters of Dawson and Kimber," says his Diary,[29] "look foul." "Parliament meets again, and this awkward business of Kimber's is coming on, in which my life perhaps is at stake." Nor was it only by the violence of his opponents that his patience was tried. Many were the sources of annoyance which this cause furnished for its leader. Thus in the course of this spring he had determined, by a subscription amongst the adherents of the Abolition, to reimburse Mr. Clarkson, whose broken health compelled him to retire entirely from the contest in which he had taken hitherto so warm a part. The conduct of such a business must, under

[29] March 30.

any circumstances, have proved distasteful to him; and there were not wanting some aggravations peculiar to this case. How he conducted its details may best be seen in a few extracts from the correspondence it occasioned.

"By the post of to-day, my dear Wilberforce," writes Lord Muncaster,[30] "I have received a letter from Clarkson, in which he tells me a subscription has been opened to procure him the sum of £1500 by way of reimbursement, &c. To the justice of this proceeding I say nothing; but its policy appears to me open to objection from the prevailing idea of Clarkson's prejudices, and the attempts made by our enemies to colour the cause with those alarming principles. Clarkson tells me I am down in your list, and that it is your intention to apply to me. The assurance, my dear friend, that it is your wish that my name should be among the rest is sufficient with me; whatever Smith and Montague, &c. write their names for, I will do the same, and hope you will approve of this."

"My dear Muncaster,[31]

My eyes have been but poorly, and unusually exercised, and my time much occupied, or I would have written sooner. With respect to Clarkson's application, I meant to mention the matter to you, and have only been restrained by a certain feeling of delicacy. The truth is that he has expended a con-

[30] May 9. [31] May 19.

siderable part of his little fortune, and though not perhaps very prudently or even necessarily, yet I think, judging liberally, that he who has sacrificed so much time, and strength, and talents, should not be suffered to be out of pocket too. We should not look for inconsistent good qualities in the generality of men. Clarkson is ardent, earnest, and indefatigable, and we have benefitted greatly from his exertions: economy and discretion are virtues not often associated with those in which he excels, ergo, &c. My idea was that (however we may choose to phrase it these voluntary aids are always the most compulsory things in the world) there should be no register of names or sums: that the collection should be private, every man contributing what he might like, assured that it would never be known what he had contributed: that when the quantum sufficit should be obtained, the money should have been lodged in the shape of a life annuity, and the secretary of one of those bodies should have been told to write Clarkson word, that a certain annuity due to him appeared in the books of the society, and asking where and to whom he would have it paid. All my fine scheme is at an end. Understand that he has not, and does not conceive he has any claim upon me; so act according to your own judgment. I must leave off.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Saturday's debate dreadfully bitter, and truly

disgusting to any mind the least tinged with the principle of Christian love. *One* face I shall never forget—(not Fox's) 'cruel his eye' he really might have sat for the picture. How different the apostle, 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, and be ye kind one to another.'"

During the course of the negociation he himself heard from Mr. Clarkson:—"Dear sir, can you send me any news relative to Mr. Samuel Smith; he promised me he would give, if you signified your approbation of the thing. I should hardly like to leave London till Mr. Smith has been canvassed; you have only this one thing to do for me." In reply to his application Mr. Smith reports to Mr. Wilberforce that he has "placed £50 for this object to his credit with his bankers," adding, "I should I confess have done so with more pleasure, had Clarkson forborne to mix politics with the subject of the Slave Trade when he travelled through the country."

"I must stay somewhat later in town," Mr. Clarkson again writes, "at least ten days, and have only to entreat all the exertion you can give with convenience to yourself in this time. You do not know what ten days may produce, particularly if we act together. There are some persons independently of those on your list, to whom I mean to apply. . . . I do not press you to ask where you are not warranted, and therefore shall say nothing more of Beaufoy or Belgrave. I

think however you might do two things; first, write to Mr. W. Smith and press him to ask Currie; second, write to Mr. Eliot; third, write to Burgh and desire his assistance. You can ask it, and if you do ask it, it will be done. I have already written to him three or four times, but he has never answered my letter; he might perhaps think it wrong in me to apply to him: . . . he could both raise and remit such a sum as £100 in ten days. If events turn out favourably the whole business may be settled in a fortnight from this time." It was not much longer before the matter was completed, to Mr. Wilberforce's great relief.

The session meanwhile advanced, and he was in "the midst of hurry and turmoil;" "never recollecting to have had so much business on his hands. Thank God I keep pretty well, though pulled down by my labours, and the unavoidable irregularity of my hours."[32] The effect of this necessary irregularity, in the interruption of his times of devotion, is frequently lamented in his Diary. "This last has been a more hurrying week from business than any one preceding. The House has kept me up late, and my devotions at night have been curtailed. I seem to have felt the effects of this all to-day, (Sunday,) in wandering and distracted thoughts. I must try in this next week to get more time to myself for evening devotions, and labour to pass through this world as a stranger. When lying awake last night how much more naturally did my thoughts run on earthly than on heavenly objects."

[32] Letter to W. Hey Esq.

"What a world," he writes to Mr. Hey,[33] "is this; and how different is the Christian life, how justly a hidden one! Pray for me, my dear sir, that amidst all my bustle, my heart may be filled with the love of Christ, and a desire to live to the glory of God." Yet though thus jealous of himself, he could not but perceive that his habits of self-government were strengthened, and that his prayers were more lively; whilst in every interval of pressing engagement his Journal records, "seasons of fasting;" "days of peculiar devotion, and receiving the sacrament:" and "hours of prayer at large; for God's mercy through Christ; for all Christian graces; for all my schemes; for the poor slaves; Sierra Leone; Indian missions; home reform; intercession for friends; for help to be useful to them; for my country at this critical time; and for grace to discharge all my duties aright."

His intercourse too with general society was marked by more constant watchfulness to do good to others, by his "preserving in it a more lively sense of God's presence, and labouring to conciliate to religion, not to relinquish it, and assume a worldly character." "Spent the evening at Mrs. A.'s—declined playing at cards, (I had played there before,) but not austerely." "On Wednesday with S. tried at a little talk. Oh that my desires were really more active." "I have staid here to try to do good to I. but how little am I fit to preach to others!" "Dined at Mrs. N.'s, to try to do her good, but I fear it did not answer. Better

[33] April 3.

to call.'" "Dined with Cecil—he is a true Christian, the nearer he is approached the better he appears.' "Breakfasted at W—. Had some talk with I. Poor fellow!—not open enough to him, partly from hoping for another opportunity, which did not occur." "At S. all day—extremely good tempered, pleasant people. This kind of society indisposes me sadly for religious communion; I either had not, or seized not, opportunities of religious conversation; no good done therefore by this visit, except in general, showing that I have no tail, which to them well known already." "Dined at T.'s with Robinson of Leicester, Venn, and others; yet nothing truly serious: a crowd is a crowd be it of whatever sort." "Dined at Hampstead to meet Jay, (the American envoy,) his son, &c.—quite Americans—sensible. I fear there is little spirit of religion in America; something of French, tinctured with more than English simplicity of manners; very pleasing, well-informed men. American Abolition of Foreign Slave Trade." "My time is often frittered away by my many acquaintances; yet good is sometimes done and county interest kept up by my being in or near London."

Towards the end of this session he made a hasty excursion with Mr. Grant and Mr. Henry Thornton to visit the fleet then in Portsmouth harbour. "June 25th. To Portsmouth and saw the Gambiers.' 26th. Rowed in a revenue boat to the prizes; then to Spithead (firing grand). The Queen and Defence, where pleasing confabulation with Gambier—then valiant

Captain Pringle, where ate—then Queen, where dined —sea scene—officers civil—afterwards got off when the ladies did—saw the ship—marine officers and sailors —characteristic manners. Rowed to Haslar hospital, where saw our poor wounded—Gambier well spoken of. "Terrible appearance of the men blown up." Home and Gambier's. Portsmouth point—wickedness and blasphemy abounds—shocking scene. 27th. To Forton prison, where much talk with French prisoners; true democrats; saw their wounded—and then off towards London," to be present in the House until the conclusion of the session.

In these last debates he observed with pain that Mr. Pitt seemed more averse from peace than in the earlier part of the year. "July 10th. To the House —Sheridan, Grey, &c. Pitt much too strong for war." On the day following parliament was prorogued, and his dissatisfaction could therefore for the present lead only to private remonstrance; but it was an omen of that public opposition to which he felt himself compelled to resort at the commencement of the following session.

CHAPTER XI.

JULY 1794 TO OCTOBER 1795.

Wilberforce preparing his religious work—Summer spent at Teston and Yoxall Lodge—Returns to town—Opposes the Address—Pitt's temporary alienation—Displeasure of his friends and constituents—Letter from Dr. Burgh, &c.—Abolition negatived—Allowance to princes—Second motion for peace—Grounds of Pitt's opposition—Personal sentiments—Tour in Yorkshire—Pitt's letter, professing agreement about peace.

His parliamentary attendance being thus suspended, "I now mean," he says,[1] "to enter upon my summer plan of steady reading, and, in particular, to resume my tract, which may well take me all the recess. Began thinking of it to-day. Being pressed to go to Hamels I wrote plainly that I wished for quiet thought. They take it very kindly and let me off. Apsley, &c. to be there. I want to resume my work in good earnest; and think of retiring, if I can, for a little quiet. I propose to go to Betchworth. To Holwood—dined tête-à-tête with Pitt, and political discussion—Eliot and his child came in the evening. 15th. Pitt went early to town. I staid and discussed with Eliot

[1] Journal, July 12.

about my tract—to little purpose. Dined with his little girl, &c. Afternoon, walked and read. Wednesday. At Holwood all day, and much the same as yesterday. Quiet, comfortable, and I hope useful after all my bustle."

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"Holwood.

"My dear Muncaster,

I am spending a day or two here with Eliot. Our tête-à-tête is only interrupted by his little girl, who has had a fever, but who (I know you will hear it with pleasure) is now recovering. I am meditating the resumption of the task I discontinued last autumn, and concerning which I formerly spoke to you. If I can get a little quiet I may proceed. As for politics, I will not enter on them. Pitt's speech, both from the treasury bench and the throne, was too pugnacious for me. It required our friend Hawkins Brown's nerves and warlike propensities to bear it. May God protect us... Then all these changes! It really amuses me, though I fear there is a noble personage not many miles from hence, at Beckenham, who does not look on them with such philosophic indifference. Adieu, adieu, my dear Muncaster. Kind remembrances to Lady Muncaster.

I am ever yours,

W. Wilberforce."

"On Thursday, 17th, after dinner I set off for Betchworth, and reaching it at night, began next morning thinking in earnest about my tract." "Here for the first time I have got a little quiet, and have resumed my work diligently; yet I doubt whether I can do any thing worth publishing. Henry Thornton, Venn, and Farish came to me on different days for discussion about it. I cannot receive their ideas, and get no benefit from them. I begin to think that help must come either from thinking over a subject together, or criticizing one's productions when done. 27th, Sunday. Quiet all day, and a serious Sunday, in which I found solitude useful and comfortable."

From Betchworth he removed after a few days to Teston; and though rejoicing in its "retirement," complains of "slow progress" in his work. "Not having yet completed my arrangement, I stare at my subject instead of closing with it. Surely it is impossible to be under better circumstances for exertion—if indeed I had a little more pleasant society it might be a stimulus. Read Tom Paine's 'Age of Reason'—God defend us from such poison. A long walk this evening by myself. To-day I have got on better—at work all morning about an arrangement. I find that though ever so temperate I cannot work well in the evening; miscellaneous reading, therefore, at that time—Swift, Voltaire's Louis XIV. Vicar of Wakefield, newspapers and letters, Idler and Rambler." "I am going on," he writes to Mr. Hey, "with the work lately mentioned to you, a sort of protest against

the religion of the higher and, indeed, of the middling orders; very slowly however, partly I think from natural inability for such a work, and utter disuse, and partly from being unable to keep myself entire for this sole concern, though I make it the standing order of the day. How striking are the events of which the last newspapers inform us! not that they surprise me; they are the natural consequences of a republican government, in the case of a country such as France in numbers and morals, and seated in a city containing five or six hundred thousand inhabitants. How thankful ought we to be for the unparalleled mercies we enjoy! It makes one shudder to read Barrere's speeches. May God yet spare us."

The preparation of his work formed his main occupation during the whole of this recess, which was spent, after leaving Teston upon the 2nd of September, at Wilford; and latterly at Yoxall Lodge.

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"Yoxall Lodge, Nov. 3.

"My dear Muncaster,

I have been here but about ten days, and mean after a short stay to repair to London. Am I never again to hear from you? I really have been for some time looking out for your superscription, and am wearied of looking to no purpose. I am now doubtful where I must direct to you, and not knowing but this may lie at Muncaster, I shall confine

myself to a few short words. I principally want to ask you whether you mean to be in town at the meeting. I shall be glad to see you again, though on but a mournful occasion. For my own part, I am at present very doubtful whether I can persist in the system we have hitherto pursued, and little as one could hope for a secure peace with such a set of fellows as the French conventionalists, or rather with France a republic, of which Paris is the seat of government, yet I begin to think we can look for no good from the prosecution of the war; and if so, it is time to stop for a while the ravages of that scourge of the human species. I own my political horizon is much clouded, though it would be better, if it were not for that thoughtlessness of God and His providence, which so generally prevails through the upper classes of society.

A French Abbé[2] who, poor fellow, was a man of fortune when Pitt, Eliot, and I were abroad, has lately escaped, after being hunted for a year and a half, by the committee of safety, through thirty departments, and is now come to London. I want to see and talk with him. I understand he says only the French can conquer the French, and concluded one of his speeches with 'Dieu vous garde, messieurs, d'une révolution.' Duncombe informed me of your being at Copgrove. I wished myself between you.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

[2] The Abbé De Lageard.

At Yoxall Lodge, upon November 8th, "I left off," he says,[3] "my tract till next year, and began to apply to politics." After a short and pleasant visit to Lord Harrowby at Sandon, "where I found Ryder not strong about the war, but yielding to direction," he left Yoxall Lodge for town, and arrived at King's Arms Yard, upon the 18th of November. "Discussed politics with H. Thornton and Grant. 19th. Off at ten to Pitt's—heard that parliament would be prorogued until December 30th, giving me time to make up my mind—strongly at present disposed to peace. Talked much politics with Gisborne, who quite agrees with me. Threw out some hints of my state of mind, and accepted Pitt's invitation to dine. Party of friends—no general politics. Conversation on the pending trials (of Horne Tooke, &c.) for high treason. 21st. To dine Ryder's—Grenville, Pitt, Steele, Lord Camden, &c. very friendly. 27th. To town to breakfast with Pitt and discuss politics." "Dined at Samuel Hoare's—Jay,[4] Hope, (his million hardly seems to raise him,) Mrs. Knowles, &c. Talk with Mrs. Knowles about Quakerism, &c. Godwin told her he was himself an atheist."

He was now giving his whole attention to the state of public affairs, and the important question of the continuance of the French war. Most soberly and gravely did he enter upon this important question, seeking first earnestly for direction from on high, and then endeavouring to form his own opinions upon the fullest

[3] Diary. [4] Mr. John Jay, ambassador from the United States.

information and most careful reflection. "I mean to set aside a day this week for fasting and religious exercises; for seeking God and praying for political direction, for a blessing on my parliamentary labours, on my country, and on those who have specially desired my prayers. May God for Christ's sake enable me to seek in all things to please Him, and submit to His will—to repress vanity, cultivate humility, constant self-examination—think of death—of saints in past times." "I find that I must as little as is really right ask people to Battersea Rise to stay all night, as it robs and impoverishes the next morning. I had meant this for a fast day, but it has been broken in upon in this way. I refused to go to the Wilderness, where Pitt and the rest are, to keep quiet; yet in this way I lose my time, and find indeed that less is done at Battersea Rise than elsewhere, though more rational conversation on matters of business actually depending." "To town, and dined at Palace Yard tête-à-tête with Jay—heard openly his opinion in politics—a friend to peace—many American war anecdotes. Then at nine, Pitt's for political discussion till near one, and not bed till near two. Head and mind full, and could sleep but very disturbedly." "I am making up my mind cautiously and maturely,[5] and therefore slowly, as to the best conduct to be observed by Great Britain in the present critical emergency. Oh that there were in our rulers more of a disposition to recognise the hand of Him who inflicts these chas-

[5] Letter to W. Hey Esq.

tisements! 'This people turneth not to Him that smiteth them, neither do they fear Me, saith the Lord,' is but too applicable, I fear, to the bulk; yet, I trust and believe, that we shall not be given over into the hands of our enemies. I beg your earnest prayers, my dear sir, for my direction and support."

To the early friend whose inflexible independence he most highly valued, he wrote as follows:

TO HENRY BANKES ESQ.

"My dear Bankes,

I have often found much comfort, and I hope some advantage, from consulting with you on politics, and we seem to have agreed in the main, both before the war broke out and since. There never was a time when I more wished to deliberate maturely, and take the advice of impartial friends, than at present; and therefore I take up my pen to say, that if you would be in London a day or two before the meeting, it might afford us the opportunity of talking the matter over fully before we should be called to pledge ourselves to the Address. From what I collect on this subject Pitt's ideas are as warlike as ever. I allow much to the argument that any peace we could make with a French republic would be insecure, and require an immense peace establishment, &c.: but then I see no grounds to hope for a better issue from prosecuting the war. There appears to me, humanly speaking, no probability of a limited mon-

archy being established in France by means of it. I am inclined to believe it might be our best plan to declare our willingness to make peace on equitable terms; and for my own part I should make no difficulty about giving up all our conquests; but as to this vile Corsica, I do not know how to act. We cannot surrender it to the tender mercies of the French. I am in hopes the Dutch will make peace with France, which will be a fair divorce, and then if ever I consent to a reunion it will be my own fault. Let me know what you think. Remember, all the French know of the intentions of Great Britain is from our declarations, and from Pitt's speeches, and these have been uniformly point-blank against any accommodation with the existing system of government in France, or in other words, against a republic. Therefore unless we make some new declaration, they can have no idea but that we mean to fight against the republic usque ad internecionem. I would gladly get an end put to this war without Pitt's being turned out of office, which will hardly be possible I fear if it continue much longer. Much however as this weighs with me, and that not merely on private grounds, the other obvious considerations are far more important. I am quite sick I own of such a scene of havoc and misery, and unless I am quite clear I shall not dare vote for its continuance. With every friendly wish I am always affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Dec. 26th. Much political talk with Grant and H. Thornton, making up my mind. 27th. Much again in political talk." His mind was at length decided. The more settled aspect of affairs in France since the fall of Robespierre gave him some hopes of the possibility of an accommodation, and peace he deemed so inestimable a blessing that no possible opening for restoring it should be neglected. "Dec. 29th. To town. Dined Palace Yard—Duncombe, Muncaster, H. Thornton, Bankes, Montague; talked politics—agreed that I would amend."

It was not merely his unwillingness to join in an open opposition to his early friend, which made him slow and cautious in arriving at this conclusion. There were other considerations which weighed even more strongly with him than the personal suffering with which his course must be attended. He could not take this ground without giving some countenance to a violent and unprincipled opposition, who had throughout condemned the war with all the asperity of party feeling. He feared too that he might increase the popular ferment which, wherever revolutionary principles had been actually disseminated, was ready to burst forth into open violence. He knew, moreover, that he could not hope to carry with him the mass of sober and well-affected people. They still thought the war necessary, and regarded all opposition to it as the effects of some Jacobinical tendency, or party motive. All these objections to his course he had well considered; but

having made up his mind to the line of duty, he had courage to face them boldly. "Parliament, he says,"[6] meets on Tuesday. I am going to London to-morrow, and I am too little fortified for that scene of distraction and dissipation, into which I am about to enter; perhaps my differing from Pitt, by lessening my popularity and showing me my comparative insignificance, may not be bad for me in spiritual things. I would now humbly resolve to begin a stricter course, as becomes me on entering a scene of increased temptations—self-denial, attention, love to all, and good for evil; in particular to bear with kindness the slights and sarcasms I must expect from political causes. Oh may God enable me to walk more by faith, and less by sight; to see the things that are unseen. Oh may He fill my heart with true contrition, abiding humility, firm resolution in holiness, and love to Him and to my fellow-creatures. I go to pray to Him, as I have often done, to direct me right in politics, and above all to renew my heart. It is a proof to me of my secret ambition, that though I foresee how much I shall suffer in my feelings throughout from differing from Pitt, and how indifferent a figure I shall most likely make; yet that motives of ambition will insinuate themselves. Give me, O Lord, a true sense of the comparative value of earthly and of heavenly things; this will render me sober-minded, and fix my affections on things above.

"Tuesday the 30th of December. A disturbed

[6] Journal.

night—full of ambition. How small things confound human pride! why not such small things God's agents as much as locusts?—worse this morning. Prepared Amendment at Bankes's. Moved it in a very incoherent speech; good arguments, but all in heaps for want of preparation; had no plan whatever when I rose." The Amendment was seconded by his colleague Mr. Duncombe, who was followed by Mr. Bankes; and though supported by many who had hitherto voted with the minister, it was negatived by a large majority. He moved it indeed under peculiar disadvantages; fearful on the one hand of exciting popular discontent, he was guarded and measured in his own statements; whilst on the other, he was "forced to adopt an Amendment stronger than he himself liked, by the violent language of the government. We are in a very alarming state, the honest men so obstinate, the others so active and dangerous."[7] "31st. Walked with T. Steele, &c. all more candid to me than I could expect. Jan. 1st, 1795. Politics rush into my mind when I wake in the night, and prevent my getting to sleep again. To the Lock—head full of politics. I had intended this for a day of more than usual seriousness, but much wasted." Upon the 26th, on a motion for peace made by Mr. Grey, he again declared his sentiments, and voted with the opposition. "To town on Grey's motion—spoke well—up in the House till half-past five."

[7] Letter to W. Hey Esq.

The painful consequences which he had foreseen, had attended his conscientious determination. It was with no ordinary feelings of annoyance that the minister had seen him propose an Amendment to the Address. There were indeed but two events in the public life of Mr. Pitt, which were able to disturb his sleep—the mutiny at the Nore, and the first open opposition of Mr. Wilberforce; and he himself shared largely in these painful feelings. He had lived hitherto in habits of such unrestrained intimacy with that great man, he entertained towards him so hearty an affection, and the spring of his life had been so cheered by his friendship, that it was with bitter regret he saw the clouds begin to gather which were to cast a comparative gloom and chillness over their future intercourse. "No one," he wrote many years afterwards,[8] with a warmth derived from his keen remembrance of his feelings at this time, "no one who has not seen a good deal of public life, and felt how difficult and painful it is to differ widely from those with whom you wish to agree, can judge at what an expense of feeling such duties are performed."

"Wednesday, Feb. 4th. Dined," he says, "at Lord Camden's—Pepper and Lady Arden, Steele, &c. I felt queer, and all day out of spirits—wrong, but hurt by the idea of Pitt's alienation. 12th. Party of *the old firm* at the Speaker's; I not there."

Nor was this the only painful circumstance attendant on his present course. He promoted overtures

[8] To Archdeacon Wrangham, December 20, 1820.

for peace, amongst other reasons, because he foresaw that the war must ultimately become unpopular, and then that Mr. Pitt's administration "would be succeeded by a faction, who knew that they had forced themselves into the Cabinet; and feeling that they had no footing at St. James's, would seek it in St. Giles's." It was not therefore without pain that he found himself repeatedly dividing with this very party, and heard Mr. Fox, in a friendly visit which he paid him at this time, express a confident expectation of his speedy enrolment in their ranks—"You will soon see that you must join us altogether." For though he loved the frank and kindly temper of this great man, and though he duly honoured his steady support of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, he regarded his public principles with a settled disapprobation, which was never stronger than at this very moment. The same reasons also which led the opposition party to claim him as their own, rendered him suspected by the bulk of sober-minded men. "Your friend Mr. Wilberforce," said Mr. Windham to Lady Spencer, "will be very happy any morning to hand your Ladyship to the guillotine." And others less violent than Mr. Windham partook in a great measure of the same suspicions. "When I first went to the levee after moving my Amendment, the King cut me." "Mr. Wilberforce is a very respectable gentleman," said Burke to Mr. Pitt, "but he is not the people of England." He was well aware himself, that the country was not generally with him. "It is not yet

ripe," he wrote this spring to a friend, who asked if he should endeavour to get up petitions for a peace, "for the measure of petitioning, which would therefore do more harm than good. If I thought that the bulk of the middle class throughout the nation was against the continuance of the war, the effect of their interference in stopping it might more than compensate for the great evil of exciting a spirit of discontent. But it is not so yet."[9] Though their strong personal regard for him kept his constituents silent, he well knew that they disliked the course his conscience led him to pursue.

In this respect indeed he was exposed to difficulties which no party man can properly appreciate; for a party man is always immediately surrounded by those who agree with him, and in their good opinion he can entrench himself. But the politician who truly thinks for himself, and takes his own stand, must be assailed with unwelcome judgments on every side. Thus whilst at this very time he generally offended the partisans of administration by his Amendment upon the King's Speech:[10] by supporting the supply of due resources to carry on the war vigorously, if it must continue, and by

[9] If the able author of "The Doctor" shall ever be pleased to throw off his incognito, the writers of these volumes doubt not that they shall be able to convince him, that he has attributed to Mr. Pitt an expression really at variance with his settled estimate of Mr. Wilberforce's character. Indeed his conduct on the present occasion shows how far he was from acting with an eye to the peculiarities of any of his adherents. He was not afraid of differing from them; and when he agreed with them, it was because he had himself given a direction to their sentiments.

[10] Jan. 2.

defending the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act,[11] he equally irritated opposition. "The opposition," wrote Dr. Milner, "will rejoice either in getting you virtually to their side, or in ruining you in the public opinion; and further, say or think what you will, I am sure it will not be long before there will be a coldness between you and government. Both opposition and your disgusted friends of administration are inclined to admit a notion that you are endeavouring to raise a consequential party of your own, and on that score both sides will concur in having a fling at you." "Many," wrote Mr. Robinson from Leicester, "exulted at your supposed desertion of your old friend, but in their haste they concluded too much, expecting that you would go all lengths with a factious opposition. With these persons, however, you have lost all credit from your subsequent conduct, and are now condemned by them as an apostate."

These trials were increased in his case by the expressed disagreement of almost all those personal friends with whom he most freely communicated upon political questions, and by the concurrent accounts they forwarded him from different parts of the country of the disapprobation of his conduct generally felt by sober-minded men. "I do not perceive," wrote the Dean of Carlisle before the meeting of parliament, "the nature of the opposition to Pitt which you are likely to make. Weigh it well, my dear friend. I hope you will not prove a dupe to the

[11] Jan. 5.

dishonest opposition, who will be glad to make use of you in hunting down Pitt, and for no other purpose. *All* will not be so sincere as you will be; nor will they be proof against the artifices of Fox, Sheridan, &c. You may I see clearly raise a phalanx, but it may turn out that you will not be able to direct its motions. I speak plainly, because I wish well to the country and love you personally." "I think indeed," he wrote again upon the 4th of January, "that you are in a very critical situation, both as to the general good or bad effect which your conduct may produce in national affairs, and also in regard to the judgment which will be formed of you personally. On Friday night I read over the debates, and I can truly say I never was so much concerned about politics in my life; I was quite low, and so I continue. There was not any one of the speeches that I liked. In the first place, I never conceived that you had intended to take so decided a part in this business as to lead the opposition against Pitt. There is not the slightest doubt but you will be represented as having gone over to the opposition, nor will it be easy to do away the impression; for, 1st, You opposed government in the great question of peace or war. 2nd, You made the motion. 3rd, The opposition approved of it and hailed the accession of their new forces. . . . I wish I may be mistaken, yet as I understand your Amendment and the consequent division, it will certainly tend to weaken the government and divide the sentiments of the country, to strengthen a factious opposition, and to

encourage the French convention. These things, I say, are certain," &c. "Let it be but supposed that you are against the war, that you are for peace and your name and authority is made use of to a much greater extent than you ever intended. The part you take is of great consequence." "I am very low about public affairs, and am looking for something more tremendous. The prospect is constantly before me. We ought, every one for himself, to make haste and keep His commandments."

Nor was the account he gave of the opinions formed by others much more encouraging. "The bulk of people think you are doing a great deal of mischief. A very few, who know your sincerity and think pretty closely, believe that you may be doing a great deal of good, by drawing the minister to his senses and hastening peace. But even these are not without doubts. It is an intricate and thorny business. The sentiments of your constituents through the West Riding respecting the part you have taken in parliament I have had some opportunity of learning, and I am sorry to say, that excepting a few notorious democrats, I have not met with a single person who does not disapprove your conduct. Mr. Sheepshanks a principal clergyman at Leeds, of good character, extensive connexions, and of popular talents, tells me that you have stood high with the manufacturers, you have managed all their business to their satisfaction; but that they differ from you on these late questions, and think you wrong; in short, that if it had

been possible for you to have ruined yourself with your friends at Leeds, you have taken the way to do it. The same sentiments pervade the most sensible people in all these parts, (Carlisle,) the democrats still excepted." From Cambridge he writes again, "I pray God bless you for writing me so affectionate a letter. I wish that you should learn from others, rather than from myself, how vehemently I have defended you from the attacks of Dr. Kipling, Jowett, Turner, &c.; some of whom hold that you have done the country much more harm than any defeat could do. H.'s conduct is imputed to personal disappointment, and as he wants weight of character, they have no mercy on him. It is now more than ever before in your life, that the consequence and force of your independence is felt." So too wrote Dr. Burgh, to whose manly and impartial judgment he was accustomed to yield much attention.

"My opinion does not concur with yours. On whatever side I look I tremble, but above all evils I most deprecate a peace, in whatever form the present moment could obtain it. Even our wretched and calamitous war is comparatively speaking a state of security and quiet. We must fight till we can fairly lay our arms aside, or compound for a fate similar to that of Holland. There is no more dangerous error than results from a man's ignorance of his own consequence. I remember when Sir Joseph Yates was censured for leaving the King's Bench, where he had counterpoised Lord Mans-

field, he excused himself by declaring he had never known his own consequence, or he would not have done so. You shall no more be ignorant of yours. I introduce you to it. The eyes of the country are upon you, and look to your sentiments as a rule for their own. I have seen your authority weigh in minds that before considered every merit of the question to be on the other side. Is not this a reason for pausing and trembling over every step you advance? The hour of taxation is at hand; think then to what deep and dangerous discontent your opposition may give not rise alone but sanction. That you, surmounting the partialities of friendship, and unswayed by the arguments supposed to be agitated in private communications, should yet resist the minister whom you respect and love, will be, nay is, deemed an arraignment of his measures so potent, that men whose modesty would obviate the force of objections rising in their own minds, and impute them rather to ignorance and defective opportunity, now resort to your judgment, and consider themselves possessed of an authority sufficient to warrant their most severe suggestions. Faction begins to claim you; you are quoted, and are growing into the subject of panegyric. It is of infinite importance that you should not appear to the country as a leader of opposition; it affords a strength to them which I am sure you do not desire to contribute. The pains that are taken in this part of the country to procure petitions to parliament for a speedy peace, are hardly to be imagined; and your name is the constant autho-

rity on which the propriety of such a proceeding is supported. In proportion to the appearance of your attachment to opposition, will the attachment of those who adhere to administration relax towards you.

"Strange as it may sound, it is not so much the war that is in the mind of many of its supporters, as the individual person of Mr. Pitt. Though they like not his new connexions, yet still they attach themselves to him, and do not love to see him opposed; they look to a day of division, keep him distinct in their eye, and mark him as boys do a particular beast in Smithfield which they mean to drive out of a herd: and oh would they only give him chace, with what delight would I join in it, till we had got him to the greatest possible distance from the black cattle with which he is mingled now; and then, when caught and confined to his former solitude, we should acknowledge, revere, and confide in our Apis again. Here you may indeed stand forward as the benefactor of your country. If his new associates must have their dividends, let them take the emoluments of office, but do you urge him to the maintenance of that control and monopoly of administration with which he benefited the country at the head of his natural friends. It is not from the friends of his co-ordinates that he will ever receive sincere support. No, I speak from the specimen before me, the old adherents of Wentworth House have not now with their leader changed their note, but are in general high talkers against the war, continuing to arraign it, as if the fellow who first slit their tongues

had not lately assumed the appearance of instructing them in another language." To the same effect wrote Mr. Hey from Leeds, though, before the war broke out, his earnestness against it had led him to exclaim, "What a world we live in! The nations are agitated like poor Calabria. When they will rest in quietness He only knows who knows all things. My earnest prayer for our own favoured but ungrateful land is, Give peace in our own time, O Lord." Yet now so convinced was he of the necessity of continuing the war, that he sent Mr. Wilberforce the most earnest expostulations upon his present conduct. So general, and sometimes so strong, was this feeling, that "in one family of my most zealous partisans," he says, "when I visited Yorkshire even as late as the middle of the summer, the ladies would scarcely speak to me."

Yet none of these things moved him. The trial was indeed severe, but it did not shake his constancy; he calmly and steadily adhered to what he saw to be the line of duty, neither deterred by opposition, nor piqued by unmerited reproach into irritation or excess. Upon the 6th of February, whilst he declared his disapprobation of its more violent expressions, he again supported so much of Mr. Grey's motion as tended to promote immediate pacification; and throughout the session he favoured every similar attempt. During this anxious time he frequently laments the injurious effects upon his spirit, of a life of such constant occupation, and shows the watchful care with which he strove to mitigate the evils he detected.

"Though I have been interrupted," he writes at Battersea Rise, "by Eliot's coming, having designed to devote this evening chiefly to religious exercises, (my own fault still that I have not,) yet this is solitude compared with London; and how serious a thing it is to look into one's own heart, to think of heaven and hell and eternity! How cold am I, to be able to think of these subjects with little emotion! Excite in me, O God, more lively sensations, and enable me to awake to righteousness. The seriousness of spirit I now feel seems favoured by this solitude, and I will try the effect of often retiring from the world to commune here with my own heart." "I have since" (a few days later) "lived in a crowd, and too much as usual. This last has been a very hurrying week, seeing many people at home, &c. This morning I have been much affected—I fasted, and received the sacrament. Oh may I be renewed in the spirit of my mind. May this little recess from the hurry of life enable me seriously to look into my heart, plan of life, and general conduct, and to turn unto the Lord with my whole soul; what can be too much for Him, who bought us so dearly—I go to prayer."

"Easter Sunday. What a blessing it is to be permitted to retire from the bustle of the world, and to be furnished with so many helps for realizing unseen things! I seem to myself to-day to be in some degree under the power of real Christianity; conscious, deeply conscious of corruption and unprofitableness; yet to such a one, repenting and confess-

ing his sins, and looking to the cross of Christ, pardon and reconciliation are held forth, and the promise of the Holy Spirit, to renew the mind, and enable him to conquer his spiritual enemies, and get the better of his corruption. Be not then cast down, O my soul, but ask for grace from the fulness which is in Jesus. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; He was the friend of sinners. Look therefore unto Him, and plead His promises, and firmly resolve through the strength derived from Him, to struggle with thy sins; with all of them, allowing none of them in any degree; and to endeavour to devote all thy faculties to His glory. My frame of mind at this time seems to me compounded of humiliation and hope; a kind of sober determination to throw myself upon the promises of the gospel, as my only confidence, and a composure of mind, resulting from a reliance on the mercy and truth of God. I have also this comfort, that I feel love towards my fellow-creatures. Still I perceive vanity and other evils working; but Christ is made unto us sanctification, and our heavenly Father will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Wait therefore on the Lord. Wait, watch and pray, and wait."

His own immediate cause was not neglected in the important general questions with which this session commenced. It had formed one subject of discussion between himself and Mr. Pitt, upon his arrival in the neighbourhood of London at the close of 1794; and on the 26th of December Mr. Pitt wrote to him,

"Nothing has happened to add either to my hopes or fears respecting the Slave question, with a view to the issue of it next session, but I think the turn things take in France may be favourable to the ultimate Abolition. Lord Effingham's going to Jamaica may be the means of furnishing us with some further good information, and I mean to instruct him as fully as I can on those points in our accounts which want to be cleared up. If any queries occur to you, pray send them to me." He writes himself, at about the same date, to one of the most zealous and consistent friends of Abolition, the Venerable Archdeacon Corbett:—"I cannot conclude without a word or two on our great cause. Suffice it then to say, that I am in no degree discouraged. Great efforts will probably be necessary, and at the proper time they will be made. It is my intention to move, next year, for Abolition in January, 1796; and though I dare not hope to carry a bill for that purpose through both Houses, yet, if I do not deceive myself, this infamous and wicked traffic will not last out this century. Let us all be active, persevering, unwearied, and trust to the good providence of God, disposed at the same time to acquiesce in His dispensations whatever they may be."

Conformably with these resolutions, he gave notice of a motion early in the session for the Abolition of the Trade. On the 18th of March, 1795, he says,[12] "There being no business in the House, and Slave business approximating, I resolved

[12] Diary.

to go down to Clapham to apply to it." The motion was deferred until the 26th, and its result is thus recorded: "Feb. 26th, To town — Sierra Leone general meeting and afterwards Slave business in the House. Said to have spoken well, though less prepared than at any other time. Beat, 78 to 61. Shameful!" "My dear sir," he writes on the 28th to Mr. Wyvill, "I cannot help finding an argument for reform in the infamous vote of the House of Commons the night before last. The Slave Trade is a load which (from my heart I believe it) hangs heavy on the country." In opening the debate he briefly referred to the arguments against the Trade with which the House was now familiar. He called upon parliament "to suppress the greatest, the most complicated, the most extensive evil by which the human race had ever been afflicted. It had been proved to be the occasion of frequent and bloody wars; as well as of innumerable acts of individual outrage. It dissolved all social intercourse; it armed every man against his fellow, and rendered the whole coast of that vast continent a scene of insecurity, of rapine, and of terror." These charges against the Trade he established afresh by the evidence of the governor and council of the new colony of Sierra Leone, and ended by a reference to the fast of the preceding day, which a national support of cruelty and injustice would stamp "as a piece of empty pageantry, and a mere mockery of God."

The motion was opposed in the speeches of Mr. Barham, Mr. East, and Sir W. Young, by the usual

reasonings of the West Indian body, reinforced by new arguments drawn from the existing war, and the dangers to be apprehended from French intrigue. Mr. Dundas again came forward to plead for a gradual abolition to take place at some indefinite period after the termination of the war. He was powerfully answered by Mr. Pitt, who in rescuing the cause from the imputation of French principles, showed that it was in direct opposition to those abstract propositions by which "the rights of man" were maintained, and declared "that he knew not where to find a more determined enemy of such delusions, than his hon. friend the proposer of the motion."

It was highly to the honour of Mr. Pitt, that his zeal in this cause had suffered no abatement from the political difference which had sprung up between himself and Mr. Wilberforce. All personal estrangement indeed was soon at an end. "Dined March 21st," says the Diary, at "R. Smith's—(met) Pitt for the first time since our political difference—I think both meaning to be kind to each other—both a little embarrassed—poor Lord C. clinging to what may amuse him, and stave off fears of death." "Dined," he says shortly after, "at Bob Smith's to meet James Grenville, Mornington, &c. They attacked me on politics, and James Grenville declared I was right, unless believing as he did that ministry were determined to make peace whenever they could with the present French government." "April 15th. Called at Pitt's the first time since before the beginning of the session—he having

the gout, and I going out of town—talked about Lord Fitzwilliam." "25th. To Battersea Rise—called Eliot's, knowing that Pitt was there, and that Eliot knew I knew it, and thinking therefore it would seem unkind not to do it. 26th. Sunday—Venn; morning. I had meant to be quiet to-day, and had hoped to be able to employ myself in devotional exercises, when after church Pitt came with Eliot; and considering he did it out of kindness, I could not but walk back with him. He talked openly, &c. After my return home, R. Smith came to see me, and afterwards Rennel came, self-invited, to dinner, and staid—talked all the afternoon —very clever, much good in him, great courage, scarcely serious enough, but much respect for good, and zeal against vice—talents to make him eminently useful. Oh may God support me in this hurrying week upon which I am entering." "Saturday, May 2nd. All Pitt's supporters believe him disposed to make peace. To Royal Academy dinner—sat near Lord Spencer, Windham, &c.—too worldly-minded—catches and glees—they importunate for Rule Britannia—I doubt if I had much business at such a place. What a painted shadow! It is not right for me entirely to abstract myself from the world; yet what a gay dream was this! O God, do Thou for Christ's sake fill my soul with the love of Thee, and all other things will grow insipid."

The tone which he preserved throughout this period when forced into opposition upon the war question, was calculated to soothe the irritation which such a

difference must naturally excite. "Your old friends, wrote Dr. Milner to him in the early part of the session, "have every thing at stake, and you must bear with them if they are now and then unreasonable. Guard yourself against saying any thing satirical at government: let there be no bitterness; nor the slightest ground for suspecting peevishness, or a disposition to thwart, or an eagerness to carry points. Your opposition in one point of view must do great mischief; this you cannot help, but there is the more reason for avoiding exacerbations of every sort, among which are to be reckoned nibbling altercation."

This was the exact spirit in which he acted, and it was by maintaining this unruffled temper that he kept political difference from becoming a cause of personal alienation. So mild indeed was his tone, whilst his conduct was most decided, that there were not wanting some who asserted, that "there was a complete understanding between himself and Mr. Pitt, and that his opposition was only a pretext." "The Duchess of Gordon told me yesterday," he says on the 13th of May, "that the Duke of Leeds, Duke of Bedford, and Lord Thurlow dining there the other day, the latter said he would bet (or did bet) five guineas that Pitt and I should vote together on my motion on Thursday for peace. This shows he thinks there is a secret understanding between Pitt and me all this time."

But though thus temperate in the manner of his resistance, he was not beguiled by rekindling friendship

into any unsuitable compliance with the wishes of administration. Truth he knew was to be valued above peace, and integrity of conduct above the harmony obtained by compromise. Upon the 21st of April, he gave notice of a specific motion upon the continuance of the war; and even before this debate came on, he was compelled, upon another subject, to oppose the wishes of the minister. Mr. Pitt at this time proposed to raise the income of the Prince of Wales greatly above all former precedent. "Bankes," says his Diary, May 11th, "tells me that Pitt is furious about our meaning to resist the Prince's additional £25,000." Upon the 14th of May he opposed this grant in the House of Commons, in a speech which was warmly commended, and which bears, in the imperfect record of the parliamentary debates, the impress of that high moral tone and that graceful eloquence which rendered it so effective. He dwelt strongly upon the actual distresses and discontented tempers of the times; and showed that though in a rude and barbarous age the Crown must be supported by the magnificence of its connexions; in a time of universal luxury "it might win to itself a higher measure of respect and veneration by a certain chaste and dignified simplicity, than by vying with its wealthiest subjects in the number of its retainers and the magnificence of its entertainments." "It is more pleasing to me, sir," he continued, "to express gratitude than censure, and I rejoice thus publicly to declare the deep obligations under which we lie to their

Majesties upon the throne for their admirable conduct, by which they have arrested the progress of licentiousness in the higher classes of society, and sustained by their example the fainting morals of the age."

This renewed opposition produced no unkindly feelings. Two days before the debate, he says, "Eliot called and asked me to dine at Battersea Rise to meet Pitt and Ryder—called and staid two hours with them all; walking, foining, and laughing, and reading verses, as before." And the day after the debate, "called at R. Smith's to see Lady Camden before their departure for Ireland; found Pitt there; he very cordial. Call at the Duchess of Gloucester's, who talked much about Prince of Wales—scandal—but abusing the vicious is not religion." "20th. Kept in town till late. (I had shown my motion to Pitt on Saturday—he very kind now and good-natured; he wrung from me to show it others; so I showed it to Grey and Fox.) To Battersea Rise, refusing Eliot in order to be quiet. 21st. Busy all morning preparing for motion—to town at three. Thornton met me, and told me that owing to Epsom races only twenty-eight members—glad at the moment, but afterwards annoyed. Called at Pitt's to settle with him when it should come on. Found Grenville, Dundas, Pepper Arden, Ryder, and Pitt—last very kind, first shy, second sour, and my pride wounded, alas!

"27th. Preparing in the morning—then to town

—debate—I not so good I think as usual in manner, and pressing home. Too proud, and therefore too much hurt by Windham's personalities; much doubting if right to reply to them—Pitt kind." "Does the hon. gentleman expect," said Mr. Windham, "that when the executive government have formed their plans coolly and upon due deliberation, they will lay them aside for his arguments. No! rather do we charge him with rashness and inconsistency, since praising the talents and integrity of the minister, he is determined in matters of so much importance to oppose him and follow out his own opinions." He repressed the evident retort which Mr. Windham's recent change of sentiment supplied readily to Mr. Fox's indignation, and contented himself with a powerful assertion of his right to form an independent judgment. "My high opinion of the minister's integrity, (and of no man's political integrity do I think more highly,) and my respect for his understanding, (and no man's understanding do I more respect,) ought certainly to make me give due weight to what I know are his opinions; but when I have allowed them their due influence, and after carefully surveying, and closely scrutinizing, and coolly and gravely and repeatedly weighing the circumstances of the case, have formed at last a deliberate judgment; that judgment, whatever it may be, I am bound to follow. I am sent here by my constituents not to gratify my private feelings, but to discharge a great political trust; and for the

faithful administration of the power vested in me, I must answer to my country and my God." The motion, which was a general overture towards a peace, was still rejected by a large, though a decreased majority; but amongst the minority of 86 who voted with him, were no less than 24 county members.

Though he persevered in pressing a peaceful policy upon the House, he was well aware that the country was not with him. "L. told me," he says, "that my conduct in differing from Pitt was universally praised. How much people represent things as they themselves feel!" So generally were his views misapprehended, that he had almost determined upon explaining them at length in a printed letter to his constituents; a design which he laid by for "two strong reasons, an unwillingness to put myself forward, and a dread of exciting popular ferment." He bore, therefore, patiently the present odium which attended on his measures; and within about six months, had the satisfaction of hearing from Mr. Pitt himself that he too was now convinced of the necessity of peace. That this clear-sighted statesman did not sooner arrive at this conclusion, that he resisted all arguments when they "battled the matter together privately" before the commencement of the session, was much to be attributed, says Mr. Wilberforce, "to the sanguine temperament of his mind, too little chastened by experience. He could not believe that it would be possible for the French government to find resources sufficient for the immense amount of

their expenditure both of men and money. How well do I remember his employing in private, with still greater freedom and confidence, the language which in a more moderate tone he used in the House of Commons, that the French were in a gulf of bankruptcy, and that he could almost calculate the time by which their resources would be consumed." [13]

But besides this natural leaning of Mr. Pitt's own mind, Mr. Wilberforce ever believed that he had been possessed by the influence of Mr. Dundas with a thirst for colonial conquest. The hope of capturing St. Domingo, an island which in its commerce with France employed more ships and tonnage than our whole West Indian trade, led him to resolve on continuing the war, until he could "make peace on terms which should afford indemnity for the past, and security for the future." That Mr. Pitt should have allowed inferior minds to obtain this influence over him, is a striking instance of the inconsistency of human genius. It was not, as has been suggested, from a love of flattery that he yielded to them; for if there were flatterers in his circle, it was not the general tone of those around him. "Neither Grenville, nor Ryder, nor many more," says Mr. Wilberforce, whose own manly independence is the surest guarantee of his accurate observation, "would ever condescend to flatter Pitt. The truth is, that, great man as he was, he had very little

[13] "I should like to know who was Chancellor of the Exchequer to Attila," was Monsieur De Lageard's remark, when this argument was maintained at Mr. Wilberforce's table.

insight into human nature."[14] Perhaps he had learned to consider all too much as tools whom he was to direct; and therefore never troubled himself to study the peculiarities of their individual characters. Nothing certainly but this, can account for the feebleness and indecision of his military expeditions. Genius and vigour which were paralysed in their government at home, rendered the armies of France every where victorious; whilst under Mr. Pitt's administration, all was energy in domestic policy, and all weakness in our military operations.

Upon the 17th of June, "the last," he says, "of real business in parliament, some serious talk in the House with Smyth and Dudley North. Poor Dudley North says he never attempts to unsettle any man's faith. The session is now closing, and I ought to fall seriously to work."

He now established himself at Battersea Rise, where, from its vicinity to London, he could transact county business, and maintain a useful intercourse with many friends whom he had scarcely leisure to see during the sitting of parliament. "Dined and slept at Pepper Arden's. A. shy about politics. He all kindness and openness." "Old Newton breakfasted with me. He talked in the highest terms of Whitefield, as by far the greatest preacher he had ever known." "Dined at Mr. Stephen's—some conversation which may not perhaps prove thrown away. He said his strongest temptations were to duelling."

[14] Con. Mem.

"John Smith, Grant, and Mr. Voght dined with me —interesting and animated conversation." "Reading my book to Henry Thornton—when going to Grant's, not having dined with them so long, Montagus came in with their three boys—made them stay in the garden. Returned to Montagu's, (she expecting to lie-in in a few days, and anxious to see me,) but found De Lageard there. Grant's children brought, and all played." "To town to give a dinner to two Gambiers, Forbes, Newton, and Serle—conversation instructive—Serle self-denying—Forbes pleasing. Lord Abercorn, he says, very generous to the poor round Stanmore—visits their houses himself, and relieves them through the clergyman. Lord A. brings people to church. Condescension in the great does much." "Dined at Thornton's—conversation not improving enough. Oh how much I want a heavenly, sober frame, as if I was always in God's sight!" "July 6th. Off early for the Speaker's—reading by the way, and serious thoughts. Arrived by dinner time. By themselves—exceedingly kind and friendly—discussed long. 7th. Speaker kind in letting me have my own way. I would have gone the next day, but he insisted in so kind a manner on my staying, that I could not bring myself to refuse. Dined with the Speaker at their Berkshire club, at Reading—the second toast most gross—Deans of Hereford, Worcester, and other D.D.'s there—extremely shocked. They laid it to the chairman's vulgarity." "9th. To town about

Sheffield, corn business. Privy Council. Hawkesbury, Portland, &c. Honest-looking baker." "Busy all day writing letters about scarcity. This now much dreaded. Meeting of merchants and bankers. Privy Council agreement."

On the 15th, he hears from Sheffield:[15]—"There was a very numerous meeting at the Cutlers' Hall yesterday, when I opened business by reading your letters. They were so much struck by the propriety of your recommendations, that they agreed to sign a resolution, pledging themselves to the greatest economy in the use of flour. . . . I was particularly desired by the whole meeting to reiterate their warmest thanks for your unremitting attention to their interests." "Price of wheat at Nottingham, 12s. per bushel. Meeting in St. George's Fields of parliamentary reformers; calling out 'War and Want, or Peace and Plenty.'" "Captain Sharpe on his business—all morning drawing up his case. Thought it right, though very disagreeable, to go to Rose about him. Interview—but little done. Unfairness of both." "Slave Committee meeting at my house. Talked with Samuel Hoare, Hunter, &c."

Amidst these various employments he found time, besides his correspondence, now very large, "to read Cowper's Letters, Blair's Rhetoric, Scriptures, comparing one part with another, Modern History, Jortin's Sermons, Horace by heart, and to begin for my own use a sort of compilation of political

[15] Letter from D. T. Browne, July 14.

facts and arguments." He was anxious also to make use of his present leisure for cultivating habits of devotion. "July 15th. Spent the day in more than ordinary devotional exercises and fasting, and found comfort, and hope some benefit." "It seems something providential that, wanting to devote the day mainly to secret religious exercises, fasting, self-examination, humiliation, and supplication for myself and others, I should be left unexpectedly alone. The result of examination shows me that though my deliberate plans are formed in the fear of God, and with reference to His will, yet that when I go into company (on which I resolve as pleasing to God) I am apt to forget Him; my seriousness flies away; the temptations of the moment to vanity and volatility get the better of me. If I have any misgivings at the time, they are a sullen, low grumbling of conscience, which is disregarded. Although, therefore, I am not defective in external duties to God, or grossly towards my fellow-creatures, but rather the contrary, (though here no man but myself knows how much blame I deserve,) yet I seem to want a larger measure, 1st, of that true faith which realizes unseen things, and produces seriousness; and, 2nd, of that vigour of the religious affections, which by making communion with God and Christ through the Spirit more fervent and habitual, might render me apt and alert to spiritual things. My finding no more distinct pleasure in religious offices (vide David's Psalms every where) argues a want of the Holy

Spirit. This might not be inferred so positively in every case, because different mental constitutions are differently affected. Mine I take to be such as are capable of a high relish of religion. I ought to be thankful for this; I am responsible for it; it will be a blessing and help well used, and if neglected it will increase my condemnation. Therefore let me cultivate the religious affections. I think it was better with me in this respect formerly; at least I felt then more religious sensibility. This was in part natural. Yet let me quicken those things which are ready to die."

Yet though he was thus disposed to condemn himself, his private Journal bears the clearest marks of an unusual warmth of spiritual affections. "My eyes," says an entry of this time, "are very indifferent—tears always make them so, and this obliges me to check myself in my religious offices."

But while he watched carefully over the affections of his heart, no man's religion could be more free from that dreaming unreality, which substitutes a set of internal sensations for the practice of holy obedience. "This morning, (Sunday,)" he writes, "I felt the comfort of sober, religious self-conversation. Yet true Christianity lies not in frames and feelings, but in diligently doing the work of God. I am now about to enter upon a trying scene. Oh that God may give me grace, that I may not dishonour but adorn His cause; that I may watch and pray more earnestly and seriously."

The scene of difficulty to which he looked forward, was a series of visits which he was about to pay in Yorkshire. "This last has been a hurrying week, and I have gone on too little as one looking into himself, after the tumultuous service of the session, and preparing for my Yorkshire encounter. Gisborne presses me much to this expedition. My judgment has been extremely puzzled whether to visit it, or go on with my work."[16] Complaints of the infrequency of his personal intercourse with his constituents had been forwarded to him by Mr. Broadley. "No man who has had occasion for your parliamentary assistance in his private business, or who considers the part which you take in public affairs, can possibly accuse you of neglecting, for a moment, the interests of your constituents. But all of them are not capable of appreciating the real value of their representative, and some of them miss the attentions which were formerly paid to them by Sir George Savile, who attended at the races and such other occasions. I must do the East Riding the justice to say, I have never heard the least syllable of complaint there. As our countryman and friend, we follow the line of your parliamentary conduct, and are too sensible of your attentions to us, both public and private, to require from you those of form. Still I think it would be well, if you would seize any proper occasion which may arise, for your seeing as many of your constituents as you can."

Upon the 23rd of July, he says, "Grant and Henry

[16] Journal, July 5.

Thornton at breakfast, and we discussed what I ought to do. Yorkshire, in August or October? Decided upon August; chiefly on the ground, that my friends differing from me in politics, but personally kind, would go from home in September and declare their difference. That this might suggest an opening, and that certain parties were actually upon the watch."

For Yorkshire he accordingly set out, and joined his mother and sister at Scarborough upon the 28th of July. "Got acquainted with Mr. Clowes of Manchester, and he dined with us—very pleasing, simple, warm, devotional; but evidently too much disposed to believe, and conversant with stories of magic, witchcraft, &c. He told some that were striking."

Upon the 4th of August he began a set of visits, which carried him through a great part of the county. His private entries abound in striking remarks upon character and manners, and show in the strongest light the care with which he now watched over himself, and sought for opportunities to do good to others. "At —— we walked about all the evening; then music, and after supper, singing. (B. went away in the morning—had said that the Atkinsons were democrats, and though confessed extravagant in prejudices, yet the account believed.) G. very light and profane; I looked grave; they all laughed; immediately after this, family prayers, where confessed ourselves miserable sinners. Much shocked at

all this. Good nature and ease, when not alloyed by gross vice, seem the popular requisites; every body who has them is styled 'the best man in the world.' Though failing in some respects and much in want of strict truth, I declared against levity, and there being nothing in serious things; and I hope my cheerfulness in society might do good. Aug. 6th. To Grimston, where a letter met me from Sir. R. Hildyard that he did see those he could without form. Grimston's triangular Castle House; very kind and friendly; taking an active part in raising volunteers (yeomanry cavalry) which do not seem to do well here—people have not been enough alarmed to know their value. In the evening on to Sir Robert Hildyard's—obliging and hospitable—talked about all things, but neither with Grimston or him much politics. . . . There is much awkwardness in a visitation like mine from having no head-quarters as a centre whence to diverge. This want gives a canvassing air. Also another awkwardness, that I go from one house to another which is hostile without intermediate purifying; and when it is known. Bacon's remark that people more easily forgive ill will to their friends than good will to their enemies. This most important when visiting for conciliation. Dined at Hornsea, and through Barmston, where the clergyman, Mr. Good, and Mr. Harland of Burlington, met us and asked us out. Went in with them and discussed. Obtained leave to send some of Miss More's tracts—accidental good. Then on to Burlington Quay; saw Osborne and others, and walked

with them on the pier. Then on to Creyke's, who very kind and hospitable; his seven daughters at home—very pleasing, modest, and rational. Spent Tuesday at Marton. Burlington church. Mr. Wade curate—a good man—ill. Mr. —— preached a dry essay on 'Woe to those who call evil good,' &c. which I disliked much—they did too. Creyke remembered it to be Dr. Clarke's; we looked and found it word for word. Monday, 10th. Unwell with a cold; but though otherwise I should have liked to stay in this family of domestic harmony, diligence, and hospitable kindness, yet fearing that Mr. Broadley would have asked people to meet me I thought it best to come off. Brought Osborne, and though tête-à-tête and no reading all the way, yet shamefully backward in talking with him seriously: felt awkward, no *launchers* occurred, alas! yet it was in my mind the whole way. Got to Ferriby to dinner—Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Thompson, Osborne, Robert Broadley, and T. Thompson very civil; Broadley frank, and kind, and manly in his politeness, a rational companion—used the word 'providential,' not immediately after I had used it, when speaking of the prevention of Lord Fitzwilliam's and Mr. Beresford's duel. Sir. H. Etherington came in after dinner. Broadley's treatment of him—proper and highly exemplary. Mrs. Osborne grateful for my former kindness—I hope to speak openly and honestly to him yet. Dined at East Dale with B. B. Thompson—she rational and pleasing—his son a fine young man. I made no use of the visit for pouring in

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any good suggestions; perhaps no good opportunities, but certainly not watchful for them. Called on B. —just as absurd and speech-making as ever. Went with Williamson about his grounds—he friendly—rather avoiding politics. To Barnard's, who received me very kindly—he and Mrs. Barnard live very quietly—much employed in planting, farming, &c. —active magistrate—books, drawings, &c. This is a rational life when divine things are first. (P. told Broadley that he wished to sell his house because he knew not what to do in the country; time hung so heavy on his hands, and he did not believe that there was any body who was not tired of reading in half an hour.) I opened (but very faintly) to Broadley yesterday, by launchers of my book, and condemning Paley's—he pleased with it, and I pleased also with them." "17th. To Philip Langdale's—he, Mrs. Langdale, and priest. Rational evening—he at prayers when I arrived. 18th. Much talk with Mr. Langdale and the priest about their tenets, and pleased to find him much in earnest, and urging me strongly. Called at Baskett's, and he going soon to dinner, could not but stay—pleased to see old scenes—perhaps I was rather too light, yet I hope on the whole I should impress them not unfavourably, as I was able to drop some things. On to York. Saw Burgh, who was all affection. Called on T—s. They violently incensed by my political conduct. G. would not come down—poor woman, how foolish! The coldness of the others seemed to give way by my

being quite unaffected, and apparently undiscerning."

There were few who could resist his powers of conversation. It possessed indeed a charm which description can but faintly recall to those who have listened to it. As full of natural gaiety as the mirth of childhood, it abounded in the anecdotes, reflections, and allusions of a thoughtful mind and well-furnished memory; whilst it was continually pointed by humour of a most sparkling quality. In this particular, the kindly, though somewhat grotesque, representation of an author[17] once before referred to unquestionably fails. Though any one admitted to the society of Mr. Wilberforce would have found him "full of kindness towards all," and would have witnessed certainly the workings of a spirit which abounded in benevolence; yet the most transient observer could not have failed to remark also the continual flashes of wit, which lighted up his most ordinary conversation; harmless certainly, yet playing lightly over all he touched upon—the sports of a fervent imagination sweetened by a temper naturally kind, and chastened by the continual self-restraint of a conscience which would not bear the offence of giving pain to any. This was a natural endowment, and had been one great charm of his early years; but it was now carefully cultivated as a talent for his Master's use. It was this high sense of its importance, which led him so often to condemn himself. He was not contented to wait for the

[17] Vid. p. 73.

chance entrance of profitable subjects of conversation, he was diligent to make it useful.

"I have been dining out," says his Diary,[18] a few weeks after this time, "and was then at an assembly at the Chief Baron's. Alas! how little like a company of Christians!—a sort of hollow cheerfulness on every countenance. I grew out of spirits. I had not been at pains before I went to fit myself for company, by a store of conversation topics, *launchers*, &c." These were certain topics carefully arranged before he entered into company, which might insensibly lead the conversation to useful subjects. His first great object was to make it a direct instrument of good; and in this he was much assisted by his natural powers, which enabled him to introduce serious subjects with a cheerful gravity, and to pass from them by a natural transition before attention flagged. He was also watchful to draw forth from all he met their own especial information, and for some time kept a book in which was recorded what he had thus acquired. This watchful desire to make society useful saved him from the danger to which his peculiar powers exposed him; and he never engrossed the conversation. No one ever shone more brightly, or was more unconscious of his own brilliancy.

How carefully he watched over himself during these Yorkshire visits, is seen by numerous entries in his Diary.—"Aug. 9th. This rambling life amongst various people abounds with temptations to vanity, forgetfulness of divine things, and want of

[18] Nov. 15.

boldness in Christ's cause; and I too readily yield to them. My health is not equal to this vagrarious kind of life, and at the same time preserving and redeeming time for serious things. Oh how much ought I to quicken the things which are ready to die! This plan was undertaken from a conviction of its being right, but it sadly disorders and distracts me mentally." His blaming himself for want of boldness in the cause of Christ, is another instance of the high standard by which he tried himself. For not only did he at the moment steadily discountenance all unbecoming conversation, but he took private opportunities of reasoning afterwards with those who so transgressed his principles. In this very visit he addressed at length by letter, with plain and honest boldness, one gentleman of great influence, who (a clergyman) had in his presence taken the name of God in vain.

"Aug. 13. This hurrying company life does not agree with my soul. How little courage have I in professing the gospel of Christ! How little do I embrace opportunities of serving the spiritual interests of my friends! How much insincerity am I led into! how much acquiescence in unchristian sentiments! I wish I had written my tract, that my mind might be clear; yet as all this more plainly discovers me to myself, it may be of service. If my heart were in a more universally holy frame, I should not be liable to these temptations. Remember they show your weakness, which when they are away, you are apt to mistake for strength. Entire occasional solitude seems eminently

useful to me. Finding myself without support, I become more sensible of my own wretchedness, and of the necessity of flying to God in Christ, for wisdom and righteousness, and all I want here and hereafter." "A quiet Sunday is a blessed thing; how much better than when passed in a large circle! My life is not spent with sufficient diligence, yet I hope I do some good by my conversation; and I thank God I this day enjoy a more heavenly-minded frame than common. Alas! how ignorant are people of christianity!"[19]

From York he passed on into the West Riding, visiting Leeds, Halifax, and Huddersfield, receiving every where a cordial welcome, and winning back by personal intercourse those whom political difference had in any degree estranged. Aug. 22nd. To Smyth's, who received me most affectionately—sweet place. Lady Georgiana a most engaging woman—kind, unassuming, unaffected. Clowes there—as positive in whimsies as in certain and important truths—what a pity! He is pious, affectionate, humble, self-denying, and I dare say firm. 24th. A sad birth-day—no time for prayer or reflection. Smyth very kindly made calls with me at Wakefield—came back to dinner, and evening on to Leeds—to Cookson's, who received me most frankly. 25th. Cookson a large party to dine. Morning Cloth Halls—saw the trustees assembled. 26th. Went over Mr. Gott's factory. A clever young man. Dined Mr. Buck's. 28th. To Halifax, where received with great kindness by the Waterhouses.

[19] Sept. 6.

29th. Cloth Hall. 31st. With Mr. Waterhouse to Bradford, where breakfasted—Mr. Okeover. Returned to Mr. W.'s to dinner, where large party, who very cordial.

"Sept. 1st. Breakfasted Edward's. Dined at the Talbot with a large party—toast given, 'May the peace of the county not be disturbed'—people very kind. Evening the whole party adjourned to Dr. Coulthurst's, where tea and supper. Wanted me to explain about my Amendment—they most decidedly for war. 2nd. Breakfasted Walker's, Crownest. To Jas. Milnes's to dinner. Evening walked and talked—Jas. Milnes rambling about religion and politics—good-natured and well-intentioned. 3rd. To Spencer Stanhope's—he told me that B. had declared he would give £1000 to turn me out. Party; and music all the evening. I perhaps too gay, though I thought it useful. Much surprised at my objecting to the child of religious parents marrying an irreligious man, 'of no vice,' as the world says—conversation rose by the match between Lord D. and Lady C. L. being broken off from family insanity discovered. How sad that this should be more thought of than the madness of irreligion! Stanhope and I called on Edmunds and Lady Stafford, and home to dinner—interesting talk at night about religion. Sept. 8th. Off early for Huddersfield. Mr. Whitacre and T. Atkinson came — then some Saddleworth friends. Cloth Hall. Sheepshank's corn idea, and natural eloquence. Felt I should be inferior to him. Saw Mrs. Law

Atkinson. Dined about twenty-five, very friendly. Evening Whitacre's.. 10th. After breakfast, and making up books for Stanhope, Burgess, and Lady Georgiana Smith, off for Flasby Hall. Preston receives me very affectionately—sweet poetical lake of his own making—at night some serious talk, to which Preston led—I told him my case. 11th. Tried for more serious talk—gave him some books, and told him of my intended publication, and its reasons. Off after dinner for Kendal, where stopped for the night. 12th. Off early—breakfasted Low-wood—leaves withered, and scene appears less beautiful than I used to think it. On after breakfast to Broughton, where I am writing. In the afternoon went on over Stonyhead, a most steep and toilsome march, to Muncaster. Muncaster very glad to see me, and all kind." There he staid until the 28th of September, making one excursion to visit the Bishop of Llandaff, whom he found "more grandiloquent, and suo genere, than I ever saw him. Went on to visit Sir John Legard—he out—Mrs. Grimston and daughter there." "How many scenes," was his private reflection on revisiting Muncaster Castle, "have I gone through, to how many dangers have I been exposed, since I was last here in 1788! I ought to be very grateful. What reason have I to devote all my powers to the service of God, who has preserved me from innumerable evils, and still holds out to me the hope of mercy! I am vexed not to have had any serious talk with M.; yet I scarce had any oppor-

tunity. Muncaster, to whom I have told my feelings about E. thinks him irreligious, and that he would not bear to be spoken to."

He left Muncaster Castle at the end of September; and on his road to Yoxall Lodge passed through a part of Yorkshire, spending "Oct. 6th with Mason, to whom I opened a little on religious matters, taking occasion, in particular, from my book to press upon him the duty of talking plainly to our friends. He did not know, he said, whether E. (a man of great moral worth, and with whom he was unusually intimate) believed in revelation or not." On the 8th he "drove to Lord Hawke's, where arrived two hours before dinner. Dr. Scandello, a Venetian, there, and a Mr. St. Victor, a French emigrant. They seem to go on rationally—no appearance of cards—he fond of farming. Off early the next morning—but Lord Hawke's family early, and he down. On to Ferry-bridge to breakfast, and thence by night to meet Samuel Smith at Nottingham."

He spent three weeks at Mr. Gisborne's, but the London season was approaching. "Oh, this vile meeting of parliament!" he writes to the Speaker, "when we shall have to discuss again about governments capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity. Poor fellow—Pitt I mean—I can feel for him from my heart, particularly on a Sunday."

On Friday, Oct. 23rd, he set out "early for town, and travelled hard, but only got to Newport Pagnell—an immensely high wind in the night. I thought of

our fleet." The following afternoon he reached Palace Yard, and "found a letter from Pitt wishing me to come up, hoping we should agree."

"Downing Street, Saturday, Oct. 24.

"My dear Wilberforce,

R. Smith tells me that, from the letters he has received from you, he doubts whether you will be in town till just before the meeting. I own, if it is not very inconvenient to you, it would be a great satisfaction to me if you could come so as to allow time for our having some quiet conversation before we meet in the House. This I am afraid there will not be much chance of, unless you are here a day or two before. I cannot help being more anxious for this, as I think our talking over the present state of things may do a great deal of good, and I am sure at all events it can do no harm. It is hardly possible to form any precise opinion of what is to be done till we see the immediate issue of the crisis just now depending, but I cannot help thinking that it will shortly lead to a state of things in which I hope our opinions cannot materially differ. I need not say how much personal comfort it will give me if my expectation in this respect is realized.

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

W. PITT."

His own "personal comfort" was no less promoted by the tone of this letter; and this was highly increased

by the further intercourse which immediately followed. "Monday, 26th. Kept myself open for Pitt. 27th. Saw Pitt at breakfast this morning, and had a most satisfactory conversation with him. Gave dinner to Duncombe, Samuel and Henry Thornton, and Muncaster—all pleased with my report. 29th. Meant to go to Battersea Rise, but Pitt wished to see me on West Indian subject (Address)—another confidential and satisfactory conversation with him."

On public grounds he rejoiced sincerely in the altered sentiments which led the minister to seek for peace, and to his personal feelings the gratification was complete. In proportion to the pain with which he had entered at the call of duty on a course of opposition, was the satisfaction of returning to a renewed career of cordial co-operation; all misunderstanding was now gone, and both Mr. Pitt and his adherents recognised the purity of principle from which his former conduct had arisen. "We might differ at the commencement of last session," wrote Lord Camden from Dublin Castle,[20] "as to the line which you then thought it right to pursue. I am candid enough to own that I can conceive it not as inconsistent as I then thought it; and that with the explanation your subsequent conduct has given, I perfectly understand it. Pitt appears to me to have been more able than ever since the meeting of parliament, and I have little doubt of his making a peace, and of the country supporting him in it."

[20] Dec. 21.

CHAPTER XII.

OCTOBER 1795 TO JULY 1796.

Disordered state of the public mind—Pitt's readiness for peace — Sedition Bills — Popular discontent — Yorkshire meeting, and petitions—Danger of the West Indies—Christmas recess—Abolition Bill reaches a third reading in the Commons—Slave-carrying Bill—Parliament dissolved—Canvass—Re-election.

WITH the autumn of this year began the darkest period of the revolutionary war. Though the arms of France were every where triumphant, yet it was not from them that our greatest danger arose. An evil spirit was spreading through Europe, and the enemies of order were but too successful in their attempt to introduce French principles amongst ourselves.

At such a time it was most important that good men should combine for the preservation of the country; and on public grounds therefore, as well as private, Mr. Wilberforce rejoiced unfeignedly in that change of Mr. Pitt's views concerning peace, which promised to enable them to act cordially together. Parliament met upon the 29th of October, and Mr. Pitt at once avowed his pacific inclination. "Walked

down to Westminster Hall, and then to the House. Pitt spoke capitally, and as distinct as possible on the main point. Duncombe, and Muncaster, and Sir Richard Hill appeared to me to be won by his frank avowal. Bankes suggested the necessity of a parliamentary recognition."[1] In the course of the debate he declared that all difference between himself and Mr. Pitt was at an end. On the following day, he heard with pleasure the same sentiments uttered by Lord Grenville in the House of Peers.—" Heard Lords' debate—Grenville distinct—Lansdowne absurd and clever. Duke of Bedford heavy and pompous—Robin Hood that can't get on, with newspaper arguments and fustian animation."

The evil humours which abounded in the state were already drawing to a head. The King was violently mobbed on his way to open parliament; tumultuary meetings were held in the metropolis; whilst the most inflammatory publications were actively disseminated. —" Papers are dispersed against property. Prints of guillotining the King and others."[2] In this crisis he deemed it needful to arm the executive government with extraordinary powers; and when upon the 10th of November, Mr. Pitt proposed to bring in a bill for preventing seditious assemblies, he at once expressed his approbation of the step. " Got up after Fox," but not being called on by the Speaker, it was late before he addressed the House. This speech, which satisfied himself, was highly commended by the supporters of

[1] Diary, Oct. 29. [2] Ib. Nov. 18.

the measure, though he expressly stipulated for maintaining unimpaired the full right of petitioning. "I do not," he said, "willingly support these Bills, [3] but I look on them as a temporary sacrifice, by which the blessings of liberty may be transmitted to our children unimpaired." They were fiercely attacked by the opposition. "All my party," said a leading man amongst the Yorkshire Whigs, "opposed the Bills, and an excellent weapon they were to employ against the ministry; but I, who had then taken no part in politics, and was living as a young man in London, saw enough to convince me that they were necessary." Being convinced of their necessity, Mr. Wilberforce laboured to perfect their details. On the 11th, he "went to Pitt's, to look over the Sedition Bill—altered it much for the better by enlarging." Upon the 12th he again maintained in the House of Commons, in opposition to his colleague Mr. Duncombe, that the Bills did in truth "raise new bastions to defend the bulwarks of British liberty." He was still engaged with the details of the measures. "A meeting at Pitt's about the Sedition Bill, after which supped with him and Mornington—my advice—Pitt's language, 'My head would be off in six months, were I to resign.' I see that he expects a civil broil. Never was a time when so loudly called on to prepare for the worst." [4] "How vain now appears all successful ambition! Poor Pitt! I too am much an object of

[3] The "Treason" and "Seditious Assembly" Bills.

[4] Diary, Nov. 16.

popular odium. Riot is expected from the Westminster meeting. The people I hear are much exasperated against me. The printers are all angry at the Sedition Bills. How fleeting is public favour! I greatly fear some civil war or embroilment; and with my weak health and bodily infirmities, my heart shrinks from its difficulties and dangers."[5]

Yet thoughts like these could not move him from the path of duty, upon which he had entered in the fear of God. "Let me look before me," he had said, at the commencement of the session,[6] "and solemnly implore the aid of God, to guide, quicken, and preserve me. Let me endeavour to soar above the turmoil of this tempestuous world, and to experience joy and peace in believing. Let me consider what in former years have proved my chief occasions of falling, and provide against them. Let me remember the peculiar character of a Christian; gravity in the House, cheerfulness, kindness, and placability, with a secret guard and hidden seriousness. Let me preserve a sense of the vanity of earthly greatness and honour." This was the secret of his strength, and when the prospect before him was gloomy, "Put," he continues, "thy trust in God, O my soul. If thou prayest earnestly to Him, confessing thy sins, imploring pardon, and labouring for amendment, thou wilt be accepted, and then all things shall work together for thy good. God protected me from Norris, Kimber, and innumerable other dangers. He is still able to

[5] Journal, Nov. 22. [6] Ib. Oct. 25.

protect me, and will, if it be for my good." Popular odium could not shake this confidence, and to the two Bills he gave, in spite of all its threats, his undisguised support.

Upon the second reading, (Nov. 17th,) "House," he says, "very late. Will. Smith struck by the extracts read by Mornington. Poor Mornington nervous, and Sheridan brutal. Up to speak, but prevented." Shortly afterwards he declared his sentiments with singular effect, in the debate upon the Treason Bill, which had now passed the Lords. Mr. Fox had declared, with more than usual violence, that if these Bills became law, submission would be no more a question of duty, but of prudence. This called up Mr. Pitt, who in few, but weighty words, declared his confidence, that "there would not be wanting those who would risk all for their country, and enforce the laws against which the people were excited to rebel." "The measure," says an eye-witness, "had all along been hotly combatted; but after Fox's intemperate assertion, the cheers on each side of the House were positively deafening. At this time Mr. Wilberforce rose; and after pointing out the strange contrast which there was between the inflammatory language of the opposition, and their pretended zeal for peace; he exclaimed with an energy, which I remember well, after an interval of forty years, 'Peace indeed! what have they to do with peace? even now they are unsheathing the sword of civil discord, to plunge it in the bosom of their country.'" He continued his support until the

Bills were carried; displaying at the same time the independence of his conduct, by objecting to what he deemed an unnecessary infliction of capital punishment,[7] and speaking strongly, on the 26th, in condemnation of a pamphlet on his own side, which he thought a libel on the House.

The contest was now spreading from the House of Commons to the country, and various places were beginning, by petition and remonstrance, to express their judgment upon these coercive measures. The sentiments of Yorkshire were supposed to be hostile to the Bills. Already were its freeholders multiplied beyond all precedent by the increased numbers of the domestic clothiers: upon their support the opposition calculated largely; whilst the friends of peace looked with some alarm to the discontent which a partial scarcity could not but excite amongst them. "The Bills," wrote Dr. Burgh,[8] "are obnoxious in this part of the world to an extreme degree." "The partisans of opposition," he adds, "have called upon the high sheriff to convene a public meeting. These things prognosticate a breach of that tranquil acquiescence, which for some time has subsisted in Yorkshire; and if in Yorkshire, so hard to be set in motion, the public mind be once expressed, we well know the sequel through all the rest of the kingdom." "The dissenters," adds another correspondent announcing the intended meeting,[9] "have never forgiven you for opposing the

[7] Nov. 27. [8] Nov. 19.
[9] Letter from John Naylor, Nov. 12.

repeal of the Test Act, and I am informed that they are expected to be there in support of opposition." In these expectations the high sheriff[10] so far coincided that he deemed it inexpedient to convene the meeting. "The assembling of so large and unwieldy a body," he replied to the requisition, "would only tend to raise riot and discontent." This decision Mr. Wilberforce regretted greatly: and when it was quoted with some triumph in the House of Commons as "a strong argument against the Bills," he declared at once that "he lamented the high sheriff's conduct, because it had prevented a full, fair, and free discussion of the subject."[11] In spite of the triumphant hopes of his opponents and the gloomy apprehensions of his friends, he trusted in the good sense of the Yorkshire freeholders. He had not learned in vain the lesson which he had been taught in 1784; and he longed to plead again before the assembled county the cause of liberty and right. To Mr. Hey he writes:—

"London, Nov. 28.

"My dear Sir,

I regret very much that the high sheriff has refused to call a county meeting, when I had taken steps to secure a full attendance from the East Riding, and have no doubt that by throwing the weight of the county of York into the scale of good order, we should have operated powerfully upon the public

[10] Mr. (afterwards Sir) Mark Sykes.
[11] Debate of November 27.

mind. I must conclude. My dear sir, my views are very gloomy, and what prevents their brightening is my seeing daily proofs of the entire forgetfulness of God and of His providence, which prevails in the higher orders. I speak especially of the leading political characters on both sides. In prosperity we were not grateful, in adversity we are not humbled.

If you learn any thing concerning a county meeting let me know. I hear the opposition intends to call a meeting, but I am told by every one that it would be in the highest degree dangerous for me to attend it, lest I should find myself amongst enemies only, and give countenance to their proceedings. I shall ride at single anchor, ready to set sail at a moment's warning.

Yours ever,

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE."

"This has been a most trying week, but I thank God I bear it well."

Upon the refusal of the high sheriff to convene the county, the opponents of ministry had privately resolved to call a meeting, which they hoped to find wholly subservient to their views. To secure this end they waited four days, and then, upon Friday, November 27th, issued circulars, requesting "the freeholders to assemble at the Castle Yard of York, if the sheriff will permit it to be used; and if not, at the Guildhall, upon the Tuesday following." By this

manœuvre they deemed themselves secure of the exclusive presence of their partisans. For as no newspaper was then published in the town of York upon Friday, the announcement would only reach those persons in the county whom they chose to summon. No post left York that afternoon for London, so that they were safe from any unwelcome intrusion from the capital; while the day named for the meeting being that on which the mercantile transactions of the six preceding months were settled both at Leeds and Huddersfield, the presence of the merchants and master-manufacturers would be effectually prevented. Together with the announcement of the meeting was circulated amongst the lower class of freeholders, a stirring appeal bearing Mr. Wyvill's signature: "Come forth then from your looms," was his summons, "ye honest and industrious clothiers; quit the labours of your fields for one day, ye stout and independent yeomen: come forth in the spirit of your ancestors, and show you deserve to be free."

The attempt would doubtless have succeeded, if the friends of order had not roused themselves with a promptitude which those who have reason on their side are not always willing to exert. An intimation of what had passed at York was received at Leeds in the course of Friday evening; and a few active men instantly met together, and resolved that the intelligence should be dispersed throughout the West Riding. On the Saturday accordingly the freeholders of various districts were assembled; and it was at

once agreed to postpone all other business, and to respond to Mr. Wyvill's call, though not in the spirit which he had contemplated.

Yet even after these exertions, many were ignorant of what was passing. "I knew nothing of it," says a leading inhabitant of the East Riding, "until the afternoon of Monday, and only got in time to York by riding straight there from the dinner party of a friend." In London of course the state of things was utterly unknown. "When undressing at twelve o'clock on Saturday," says Mr. Wilberforce,[12] "I received a note from Sir William Milner, saying that the York meeting was to be held upon Tuesday next; but I had given up all idea of going." He thought it quite impossible that a general meeting could be gathered on so short a summons; and to attend a party council of his enemies would have been manifestly foolish. "You could not have conceived," wrote Mr. Hey,[13] after the event, "that so large a number of your constituents could have been collected in the short space of three days." Yet his suspicions were perhaps aroused by the communication of a friend, who came to tell him that "something extraordinary is certainly designed in Yorkshire, since —— was seen to set out on the north road this morning in a chaise and four." Enough, however, was not known to show that his presence would be useful, still less that it was so far necessary as to justify his travelling upon the day

[12] Diary. [13] Dec. 5.

which it was his chiefest privilege to give up to religious employments, until he was in his carriage on his way to church on Sunday morning. Just as he had got into it, an express arrived from Mr. Hey and Mr. Cookson, informing him of all that had been done, and urging him at all costs to be present at the meeting. "I sent immediately to Eliot, and then went there. He and I, on consideration, determined that it would be right for me to go; the country's peace might be much benefited by it."[14]

Sending back therefore his carriage to be fitted for the journey, he went himself to the neighbouring church of St. Margaret's . . . "Sir George Shuckburgh there—talking—sad sermon,"[15] . . . and then called on Mr. Pitt. "I saw Pitt—he clear—much disquieted."[16] Whilst they were still together, his servant brought word that his carriage could not be got ready so soon as was required. "Mine," said Mr. Pitt, "is ready, set off in that." "If they find out whose carriage you have got," said one amongst the group, "you will run the risk of being murdered." So fierce had been the spirit of the populace in London, that the fear was not entirely groundless; and an appearance of the same spirit in the great cities of the north had led some amongst his friends to write to him, that "if he ventured down it would be at the hazard of his life." But it was not such apprehensions which had "disquieted" his thoughts; and when once satisfied that duty

[14] Diary. [15] Ib. [16] Ib.

called him, he cheerfully began the journey. "By half-past two," he says,[17] I was "off in Pitt's carriage, and travelled to Alconbury Hill, four horses all the way," two outriders preceding him; a provision then essential to a speedy journey, even on the great north road. After a few hours rest, "I was off early on the Monday morning, and got at night to Ferrybridge. Employed myself all the way in preparing for the meeting."[18] He had been supplied by Mr. Pitt with samples of the various works by which the fomenters of sedition were poisoning the public mind; and of such importance was his mission deemed, that an express was sent after him to Ferrybridge with further specimens. "Almost the whole of Monday," says his secretary, "was spent in dictating; and between his own manuscripts and the pamphlets which had followed him, we were almost up to the knees in papers." He reached Doncaster by night, and thence sent an express across to Leeds, to announce his arrival to his friend William Hey.

"Doncaster, Monday night, near 9.
Nov. 30, 1795.

"My dear Sir,

You and Mr. Cookson together, loosened my holdings yesterday morning, and forced me out of London in the afternoon. I have made a forced march, which after a hard week is an effort, and, I thank God, have arrived thus far tolerably well. I

[17] Diary. [18] Ib.

am going forward, and my present intention is to be at York about an hour before the meeting, unless my motions should be accelerated in consequence of intelligence I may receive as I advance. I trust you will come over, and if you do early in the morning, we may meet at Tadcaster. I am deeply impressed with a sense of the necessity of bold and decided conduct, but wish I had had more time to prepare for so trying a day as to-morrow. *Pray that I may be supported.* I hope and believe I am engaged in a cause pleasing to God. But I must stop. If any of my friends now absenting themselves would go to York, knowing of my intention to be there, send to them betimes.

"I will make no apology for desiring you may be knocked up. You who submit to it so often for personal interests, will not, I am sure, complain of it in a single instance pro bono publico. Kind remembrances.

Yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. I fear the high sheriff's not calling the meeting is likely to produce a thin attendance, and to operate against us."

The day had not been idly spent by the supporters of the constitution. The West Riding had been raised; "The towns of Leeds, Halifax, Wakefield, Huddersfield, and Bradford," writes Dr. Coulthurst,[19]

[19] Dec. 10.

after the event, "have gained singular credit by their attendance. But the town of Leeds deserves best of the public, for it stood in the front of the battle." The whole county seemed pouring into York. "On Monday," says a private letter of the day,[20] "there went through Halton turnpike above three thousand horsemen." These were principally clothiers, (Billy-men, as they were long called from the event of the next day,) riding on the ponies which carried commonly their cloths to the adjoining markets. Many came from Saddleworth, a distance of near sixty miles, spending a great part of the night upon their journey; and stormy as was the next morning, (Dec. 1,) they still crowded the road from Tadcaster to York. "It was an alarming moment," says an eye-witness, "when these immense numbers began to pour in, while as yet we knew not what part they would take." But by Monday evening the supporters of the government began to feel their strength. "When we arrived at York," says Mr. Atkinson, "we were told that our adversaries were collected at the great inn in Lendal, and that our friends were to meet at seven, at the George in Coney Street. Thither we repaired without delay, and found a respectable body of gentlemen already assembled. The enemy, through the friendship of the corporation, had previously secured the Guildhall, where they could lay their plans at leisure. We sent a deputation to offer to meet them the next morning in the Castle

[20] From Rev. Miles Atkinson of Leeds to his son at Cambridge.

Yard, according to their first announcement, where both parties could act freely, but they refused. They then proposed to admit our men and theirs into the Guildhall by forties; but this we declined, knowing that the hustings would be filled with the mere dregs of York, hired to drown with noise what they could not overcome by argument; but we offered to meet them on any fair and open ground they chose. In the morning we assembled at the York Tavern, which was about as near to the Guildhall as the tavern at which they met; and at half past nine we spread our forces even to its gates. They sent out to reconnoitre, and found our strength treble theirs. We were in high spirits, and the enemy were exceedingly discouraged. As soon as the gates of the Guildhall were opened, our men rushed in with theirs; but by entering through the Mansion House they had previously possessed the hustings, and had chaired Sir Thomas Gascoigne. This unfairness stirred up the Leeds' spirit; our men pushed up to the hustings, and lifted several of their number into the midst of their opponents' crowd. These immediately called upon Sir Thomas to quit the chair, and wait till the freeholders had voted in a chairman. He refused to leave it, and they hoisted him out, and voted Mr. Bacon Frank into his place. Our party then proposed and carried by a majority of three to one an adjournment to the Castle Yard, the usual place of meeting, and where numbers had already gathered."

At this period of the business, the want of any

leader of acknowledged power was deeply felt amongst the supporters of the constitution. The plans of the opposite party had been long matured, and their bands were marshalled under their appointed chiefs; but the friends of order had come suddenly together, and there was none to take the lead in their movements, or engage their general love of order in support of these necessary though obnoxious Bills. Just when this want was most acutely felt, Mr. Wilberforce's carriage turned the corner into Coney Street. His approach was not generally known. "You may conceive our sensations," says a Leeds gentleman, "when he dashed by our party in his chariot and four a little before we reached York." He was received with the same exultation by the assembled concourse. "He arrived," says Mr. Atkinson, "at about a quarter to eleven, amidst the acclamations of thousands. The city resounded with shouts, and hats filled the air." "What a row," he said to his son, when quietly entering the city thirty-two years later by the same road, "what a row did I make when I turned this corner in 1795; it seemed as if the whole place must come down together."

Leaving his carriage he pushed through the tumult of the Guildhall, and soon appeared upon the hustings. Here he vainly attempted to prevail on Mr. Wyvill and his friends to concur in the adjournment to the Castle Yard. "He hoped," he said, "to have met his opponents that day face to face, and convinced them of the groundlessness of their prejudices,

if they were not prepared to shut up all the avenues to the understanding, and all the passages to the heart." But fair discussion was not their desire, and they refused to quit the Hall. He proceeded therefore without them to the Castle Yard. "And now," said Mr. Bacon Frank, taking his place upon the great stone steps which supplied the place of a temporary hustings, "now at least we are upon county ground." "It was perhaps the largest assemblage of gentlemen and freeholders which ever met in Yorkshire."[21] "Here," writes Mr. Atkinson, "we had three good speeches from Colonel Creyke, Mr. Spencer Stanhope, and Mr. Wilberforce. The last, I think, and so I believe think all that heard him, was never exceeded. A most incomparable speech indeed. All went on quietly, till that mad fellow Colonel Thornton stood up in his regimentals, and would speak in favour of the Jacobins. Thornton was heard a little, and some of the York rabble collected to support him." "He told them, that many of the soldiers were ready to join them whenever they should rise."[22] "In consequence of this interruption, the chairman ordered the freeholders to take the right hand of the court. We did so, and were by this time about four thousand. The address and petition against seditious meetings, and in favour of the King and constitution, were carried almost unanimously; and Thornton, after throwing off his regi-

[21] York Paper of the day.
[22] Letter of Bacon Frank Esq., Dec. 9.

mentals to the rabble, was carried in a chair to the Guildhall. The conclusion was highly favourable, and we were all in the highest spirits. Whilst congratulating one another by thousands in the streets, we did not see one adversary appear."[23]

"Up betimes," is his own brief entry of this busy day,[24] "and off to Tadcaster. There found all the West Riding was in motion. Got to York at eleven. Kindly received. Guildhall—Castle Yard—spoke—interview with Wyvill—his sad paper. Thornton giving away his regimentals to the mob. In speech, foolishly did not go more into length." "I should have said much more," he tells Mr. Hey,[25] "if we had got into debate, for I really had not natural elasticity enough to expand, without opponents, to such a size as I should have swelled to, if I had been as large as I was prepared to be." Yet his speech, though shorter than he had designed, proved signally effective. Mr. Wyvill did not hesitate to attribute the decision of the county to his personal efforts and influence. "It rejoiced my heart," wrote Dr. Coulthurst, "to *see* you at York, and much more to *hear* you. Your appearance, but most of all your very eloquent philippic, was wonderfully beneficial to the cause, the country, and yourself. Many who, to my personal knowledge, came decidedly hostile to the Bills, were induced, on hearing your speech, to sign the addresses and petition. You have gained over almost every man in the five

[23] Letter from Mr. Atkinson. [24] Diary.
[25] Letter, Dec. 7.

great commercial towns of the West Riding. Our new sheriff Godfrey Wentworth declared, after he had heard you, that the greatest pleasure he could enjoy in possessing an extensive influence in Yorkshire, would be in coming forward with a large body of freeholders to support your election."[26] From an influential merchant in the town of Leeds he heard:

"Leeds, Dec. 3, 1795.

"Dear Sir,

I earnestly hope that this will find your body recruited from its fatigues; and I think your mind will find cause for exultation, now, and so long as the partnership continues, in contemplating your York expedition. The burst of applause spontaneously flowing from constituents brought there by no influence whatever, save that of disinterested independence and purest civic principle . . applause from such hearts, and so uprightly earned . . will ever sound in your ears; and you may rest fully satisfied, that this event has seated you firmly in the place you have so ably filled. It has confirmed the staunch, fixed the neutral, and deterred the speculative. The united West Riding is not easily to be overmatched.

"You will have petitions from this division up to-night, though the shortness of time renders the signatures comparatively few. The bells were ringing till midnight on Tuesday from the first moment of intel-

[26] Feb. 11, 1796.

ligence. Twenty King's men to one Jacobin was the cry, and *the glorious first of December* to be an era.

I am always,
Your most obliged humble servant,
W. COOKSON."

The issue of this effort is well worthy of remark. His success had been complete; and it was the manifest reward of an unflinching obedience to the dictates of his conscience. When he left London, he was entirely ignorant of the temper of the great towns in the West Riding: his friends had warned him to expect their opposition; and this would certainly have cost him his seat at the approaching election. But he was determined to discharge his duty; and he returned beyond all expectation at the very highest wave of popular applause, and safe from all possibility of rivalry. "I never saw you but once," wrote a constituent long afterwards, "and that day you won my heart, and every honest heart in the county. It was at the York meeting. I never felt the power of eloquence until that day. You made my blood tingle with delight. The contrast of your address, and the mellow tone of your voice, of which not one single word was lost to the hearers, with the bellowing, screaming attempts at speaking in some others, was most wonderful. 'You breathed' energy and vigour into the desponding souls of timid loyalists, and sent us home with joy and delight."[27] Not less

[27] From Colonel Cockell, Sept. 10, 1810.

worthy of remark is the quiet thankfulness which threw a grace over his triumph. "With him," he told Mr. Hey,[28] "it was matter of thankfulness to God that the enemies of peace and public order had been so discomfited. For myself, I should be thankful to have been so far honoured as to have been made in any measure the instrument of the goodness of Heaven."

The successful issue of the meeting he had communicated to Mr. Pitt the same evening by express; and on the following morning he set off himself for London. "On Thursday," he says,[29] "I travelled on to Biggleswade, and on Friday got to the House with the petitions. I told my tale with effect. I was received with great gratitude and cordiality. This teaches a practical lesson." "Great, doubtless, was the effect of his reappearance in the House of Commons; backed, as he now was, by the evident approbation of his county. He was able to tender to the House his solemn declaration that the north approved of the measures of the ministers. Every day confirmed his statements in the unanimous petitions which followed him from Yorkshire. "The influence of those who called the meeting might be expected to be great in this neighbourhood," says a letter from Rotherham,[30] "nevertheless the number of those who have not signed our petition is extremely small." "We have got the signatures of every freeholder but

[28] Dec. 7. [29] Diary.

[30] From Richard Holden Esq.

two in Pocklington, Weighton, &c."[31] "Every churchman in this parish[32] save one has cordially concurred in it." "Here it has been signed by almost every individual freeholder."[33]

Such were the accounts from the different parts of Yorkshire. "Our petition was not well supported in the Lords," complained the chairman of the Castle Yard meeting,[34] "however 'defendit numerus.' It spoke for itself, and was so decidedly the sense of the county, that it could not be doubted. I find by a printed list sent me from Leeds that our opponents mustered no more than 309; if it had been generally known that names might be sent after the Tuesday evening, I am convinced that our 7000 might have been greatly increased." Mr. Pitt felt deeply the importance of his efforts. Other counties followed in the wake of Yorkshire, "proving the justice of what Fox would often say, 'Yorkshire and Middlesex between them make all England.'"[35]

His use of this success is a good illustration of that singleness of aim which enabled him to effect so much. Instead of seeking to reap from it any personal advantage, he employed it in the cause of his African clients. Recent events in the West Indies had revived the old charge that the friends of the negro race were Jacobins at heart. The government of France, finding it impossible to resist the naval force

[31] Letter from Robert Denison Esq.
[32] Bingley.
[33] Mr. Whitacre from Huddersfield.
[34] Bacon Frank, Esq.
[35] Con. Mem.

of England, attempted in despair to raise against it the whole black population. For this purpose she enfranchised her own negroes; and sent the ferocious Victor Hugues to proclaim freedom and enforce rebellion amongst the English colonies. The flame was soon kindled in Grenada, Dominica, and St. Vincent's; to them the opponents of the Abolition pointed with no little triumph; and quoted, as the fulfilment of their worst prophecies, the outrages which here walked hand in hand with negro liberation. It was undoubtedly a fearful sight which was presented by these miserable islands; and there were not wanting those amongst the honest friends of Abolition who thought that the question should be let to rest till some more peaceful season. Nothing short of his indisputable attachment to the constitution could at this moment have enabled Mr. Wilberforce to persevere. And there never was a happier moment for renewing his exertions, than in his present hour of civic triumph. "Your giving notice *at this time*," writes Dr. Burgh, "that you intend to bring the Slave Trade again before the House, and doing it too in rather a marked manner, will be of service to the question, and snatch it, in the estimation of the country, from that odious connexion in which those who contend for the trade have endeavoured to place it before the public eye. They who make sale of their brethren, will hardly stick at falsehood; and accordingly diligence has been used to associate Jacobinism, equality, and the abolition of a trade that preserved

the gradations of society. At this time you stand in a situation peculiarly favourable to the refutation of all this unchristian stuff. Last year you had not half the advantages you now possess. To what nonsense were my ears then a frequent witness. Your desire to terminate the war was a result, forsooth, of dissenting principles, principles hostile to all good government, and your zeal to abolish the Slave Trade was of course included in the same silly charge. But as yet nothing has faded upon the memory of those who heard you here; and this, therefore, is the moment to bring your question under the protection of your renewed reputation while in its bloom, with all its honours hanging thick upon it."[36]

Upon the 15th of December, he gave notice that early in the following session he would propose his motion, reminding the House at the same time that the first day of the approaching year had been the period named in 1792, for the termination of the trade. "And now," he added, "when we are checking the progress of licentiousness, now is the very time to show our true principles, by stopping a practice which violates all the real rights of human nature."

Meanwhile the Christmas recess brought him a short season of repose. "The last fortnight or three weeks," he says on the day of the adjournment,[37] "have been severe trials to a man weakly like me; and

[36] Letter from Dr. Burgh, Dec. 12.
[37] Diary, Dec. 19.

I have lost ground in health which I must recover. I have kept rather bad hours. In my religious frame, I hope, better than sometimes; more reading the Scripture. Much occupied in writing—oppressed with letters about the petitions. I have given up my idea of an address to my constituents; Mornington promising to write a pamphlet, though without his name. Pitt very friendly just now."

Battersea Rise was his head-quarters during this recess. "Thursday. Dined at Jeremy Bentham's—Lord St. Helen's, Abbot, and Romilly there. Dined early, and sat late, discussing very pleasantly about Lord St. Helen's travels, &c." [38] "Wednesday. Dined with old Newton, where met Henry Thornton and Macaulay. Newton very calm and pleasing—owned that Romaine had made many antinomians. Christmas day. Up early for prayer, and discussed to servants on the sacrament. Macaulay came at breakfast with Sierra Leone news. I averse almost to hear it—wrong—it requiring immediate attention. Talked with a Scotch Presbyterian, thought of for Sierra Leone, but objecting to terms of ordination."[39] "Sunday. Battersea Rise all day—Henry and I—up rather early for prayer, which answered through God's grace. I hope a profitable, and I am sure a happy, Sunday. Venn came at night, and told us his grief—that a new chapel talked of because he did not preach the gospel. We discussed, and told Venn his faults; but he acknowledged, and we too, who much agree

[38] Diary. [39] Ib.

with him, that he does not agree with any of the gospel preachers. They swell one part to the lessening of another; strain and pervert Scripture." [40] "Dr. and Mrs. A. and others dined—this meant for doing two first good; but I doubt if it has at all answered, except that family prayer, &c. may have struck them. Winter evenings not so well as summer (this practical) when one can walk and split into parties." "Dined Morton Pitt's—Pitt, Glasse, Rumford, Bentham, General Bentham, Rose, and others—conversation not edifying. Poor Bentham! dying of sickness of hope deferred, which forced to stifle." [41] "Dined tête-à-tête with Pitt—long discussion about politics and people—he very open, and fair, and patriotic—no idea of peace before another campaign."

To town—levee with Lord F.'s yeomanry cavalry address. King talked to me of my friend Gisborne's answer to Paley. Then to Pitt's—he accosted me very affectionately. After some doubt, to Battersea Rise, where quiet all the evening." [42] "9th. To Navestock—found Bishop of Gloucester there—his opinion about Johnson's irreligious respectable companions." "Sunday. Walked long after church with Lady Waldegrave.[43] Her deep interest for Lord Cornwallis and Thurlow.[44] Thurlow's kindness and generosity to her. Lord Cornwallis says he is an unhappy, mortified man, but Lady Waldegrave

[40] Diary, Dec. 27. [41] Ib.
[42] Ib. Jan. 6, 1796. [43] Ib. Jan. 10.
[44] The guardians to her son the late Lord Waldegrave.

does not think him so. Lady Waldegrave told me that when a girl she was conscious of the unprotected and dangerous state of herself and her sisters, and prayed to be kept from evil."

The following Friday he resolved "to set apart chiefly for religious exercises; fasting in my way, i. e. being very moderate in food, which only does with me. I cannot employ it so entirely, because I have some business about the poor which will not bear any delay. My chief reasons for a day of secret prayer are, 1st, That the state of public affairs is very critical, and calls for earnest deprecation of the Divine displeasure. 2ndly, My station in life is a very difficult one, wherein I am at a loss to know how to act. Direction therefore should be specially sought from time to time. 3rdly, I have been graciously supported in difficult situations of a public nature. I have gone out and returned home in safety: my health has not suffered from fatigue: and favour and a kind reception have attended me. I would humbly hope too, that what I am now doing is a proof that God has not withdrawn His Holy Spirit from me.[45] I am covered with mercies. Return then unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. 16th. Morning felt the fragrant impression of yesterday."

Towards the conclusion of the recess he spent "a day at Holwood. Morning walked with Pitt. Heard part of Mornington's first number on Seditious Assemblies' and the other Bill. Next morning to town—

[45] Journal. Friday, Jan. 15.

tête-à-tête with Pitt—he very kind, open and fair about peace, and I think wise too."[46]

Parliament met upon the 2nd of February, and on the 18th, he moved for leave to bring in a Bill to abolish the Slave Trade in a time to be limited, fixed afterwards to March 1st, 1797. He "opened the business," he says, "coldly and indifferently," but was roused by the debate which was unusually animated, and in his reply spoke "warmly and well."[47] The brunt of the contest was borne by the ordinary West Indian opposition, General Tarleton, Mr. Dent, and Sir William Young; but some who professed to join in his condemnation of the trade, were in truth its most efficient supporters. Nothing, he urged, would so much check Victor Hugues, and retard the progress of French principles, as to suspend the importation of fresh slaves, and thereby withhold the raw material of sedition. Yet with indefatigable perseverance Mr. Jenkinson declared, "I anxiously wish that the question were postponed at least till the return of peace." "There is something," he replied, "not a little provoking in the dry, calm way in which gentlemen are apt to speak of the sufferings of others. The question suspended! Is the desolation of wretched Africa suspended? Are all the complicated miseries of this atrocious trade—is the work of death suspended? No, sir, I will not delay this motion, and I call upon the House not to insult the forbearance of Heaven by delaying this tardy act

[46] Diary, Jan. 22. [47] Ib. Feb. 18.

of justice." "What!" he said to the West Indians who had boasted in the course of the debate that their slaves were well fed, clothed, and lodged; "what! are these the only claims of a rational being? Are the feelings of the heart nothing? Where are social intercourse and family endearment? where the consciousness of independence, the prospect often realized of affluence and honour? where are willing services and grateful returns? where, above all, the light of religious truth, and the hope full of immortality? So far from thanking the honourable gentleman for the feeding, clothing, and lodging, of which he boasts, I protest against the way in which he has mentioned them, as degrading men to the level of the brutes, and insulting all the higher qualities of our common nature."

General Tarleton's motion for an adjournment was negatived by a majority of 26. "Surprise," he says,[48] "and joy in carrying my question. Speaker asked me and Pitt together to come and sup—thought it would be unkind to Pitt to refuse. He delighted with having carried it—very kind, and seemed vexed when I mentioned our little heat. I staid too late, and in my feelings too little of sacred joy and humble gratitude."

He was now occupied in perfecting his Bill, and frequently enters in his Diary, "Morning at Pitt's about the Slave measure." "I expect," writes his friend James Gordon, "that it will be something

[48] Diary.

wonderful. The production of four such heads, and I believe I may say four such hearts, for Fox should be better than he is, his natural disposition is good. Politics are said to harden the heart, and pervert the understanding. In this instance it seems not. Serjeant Adair's speech I like the best of all—comprehensive, strong, clear." "On Monday, Feb. 22," says the Diary, "crossed from dinner, and finding the House in a good state brought in Slave Bill without opposition, and recrossed." He did not long continue unopposed. The 3rd of March was fixed for the second reading, and after a morning spent upon the Bill at Mr. Pitt's, he was dining in Palace Yard with a party of his House of Commons friends, when early in the evening a supporter of the Slave Trade moved the second reading of his Bill, hoping by this manœuvre to prevent its further progress. His watchfulness defeated the attempt. "Hurried from dinner at home over to House, to the second reading of the Slave Bill. Spoke against time till many came. Carried it 63 to 31." [49]

On the 7th the Bill was committed. "Breakfast,[50] Stephen as before, and Adair. Afterwards, William Smith about Slave Bill. Long busy. A few friends dined before House. Got Bill through committee." [51] But at the third reading these fresh hopes were again disappointed. "Dined before House. Slave Bill thrown out by 74 to 70, ten or

[49] Diary, March 3. [50] Ib.

[51] By a majority of 76 to 31.

twelve of those who had supported me absent in the country, or on pleasure. Enough at the Opera[52] to have carried it. Very much vexed and incensed at our opponents."[53] "Such wretches as T. and D." writes Dr. Burgh[54] with considerable heat, "may be consigned to mere contempt. Sir William Young by his insincerity entitles himself to as much attention as may frustrate a shallow trick, but against Dundas I recommend, and will cultivate in myself, a propensity to direct hostilities. Reared as he has been in the small metaphysics of Scotland, and cramped by his country's imitative adoption of French philosophy, I can only see in the influence of such a man the approaches of French morals, French politics, French atheism."

His own heart was sickened at seeing this great cause thus sacrificed to the carelessness of lukewarm friends, and the intrigues of interested enemies. "I am permanently hurt," he says, "about the Slave Trade." His own attention to the cause was of another character. "The Slave Trade is coming on," he wrote at this time to a friend[55] whom he had engaged to visit, "and every thing must give place to the House of Commons." "Asked," he says the

[52] "A new comic Opera was brought forward last night, under the name of 'I Dui Gobi,' (the Two Hunchbacks,) the music of which was composed by Portugallo. Vignoni, well known ten years ago, appeared last night, &c. There was a large and splendid audience."—True Briton, March 16.

[53] Diary, March 15.

[54] March 19.

[55] Admiral Gambier.

day before,[56] "to a small musical party of the Duchess of Gordon's. To my surprise found a very large fashionable party. People greatly surprised to see me. Lady A. regretting that having so long lived regularly, now she was obliged to go out and keep late hours on account of her daughters, who are come out, and going to such places as these every night. Lady Salisbury and others expecting me to come to them. Kept up too late, though came away at twelve, when fashionables only entering." "Refused two assemblies, and Lady Salisbury's, to which pressed."[57]

For useful objects he could still find time. "March 5th. Received a letter stating the distress of the French emigrant clergy. Kept awake at night. Thought much of them, and formed a plan."[58] The next day "after church, saw the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon, and several other persons, on emigrant business. Then with Henry Thornton, by appointment at my desire, to Lady Buckinghamshire's. She and Miss Macnamara earnest about the poor emigrants."[59] On Wednesday, the public fast day—"Explained to my servants the nature of fasting, and pressed on them its importance, then did some necessary business about the emigrants."[60] "I propose to read at least a hundred lines of Virgil daily—often more."

Before the conclusion of the session an attempt was

[56] Diary.
[57] Ib. March 14.
[58] Ib. March 5.
[59] Ib. Sunday, March 6.
[60] Ib. March 9.

made by Mr. Francis[61] to improve the condition of the negroes. "Francis," writes Dr. Burgh,[62] "whose judgment does not seem to be equal to his laudable zeal on this subject, has uttered a sentence which I hope, if true, is not materially so: he says that you are not well, and ascribes your absence from the House of Commons to this cause. I beg as a favour that you will let me have a particular account of yourself. I had intended to have inquired into your intentions with regard to this immense question, and even to have urged the necessity of giving no respite to your murderous opponents, but keeping the whole of Abolition forward in whatever form you can contrive to shape it, in this mortal hour, and therefore 'molle tempus' of the present parliament. But I can trust you when you are well, without either my goad or prudence."

There was too much truth in the announcement which had startled Dr. Burgh. He was confined entirely to the house by a very serious illness. "I have been indisposed," he says,[63] "for ten days, and have had my head a good deal weakened. My mind has, I thank God, been in an easy, tranquil state, reposing on the promises with a consciousness of deep demerit, yet trusting in God's mercy through Christ. I trust He will not spurn such a one from Him. I have lately felt and now feel a sort of terror on reentering the world."

[61] April 11. [62] April 14.

[63] Journal, April 17.

"I have not," he adds,[64] after a partial restoration, "enough considered God's late call of illness, nor am I now desirous enough of health and strength, that I may be more active, but rather secretly glad that I have a privilege to be idle. This is base! What should I think of it in any one else, who should be glad that he was compelled to live quiet, and indulge at home, instead of going about in the service of some great benefactor." This indisposition to all action was itself a part of his complaint; for his natural temper disposed him to exertion. He describes himself a few days later, as being, "according to the Eastern proverb, at least according to the spirit of it, (better to sit than to walk, to sleep than to wake, &c.) in a most enviable state, for I suffer little or no pain, and can eat, drink, and sleep; but a life of more activity better suits my depraved, unoriental taste, and I shall be very glad to be given up again to the toils of my ordinary habits. Yet, to be serious, I hope I feel thankful for all the conveniences and blessings which surround me, the comfort of which is never so marked as in a state of sickness."[65]

His friends looked forward with great apprehension to the fatigue of the approaching election; and he had already written word to Yorkshire that "his state of health must be his apology for not canvassing." Yet though "unable to stay through the night," and suffering from even occasional

[64] Journal, April 24.
[65] To Right Honourable Henry Addington.

attendance, he could not be persuaded to give up his labours in the House of Commons. "13th. In bed, under Pitcairne's advice. 15th. Getting better, but still not capable of applying—so do not attempt it. 16th. Got out for the first time in the middle of the day. 18th. Saw Adair about Quakers' business. He (at length) to move and I to second. 25th. Lay down in the morning—very faint and weak. Pitt and Dundas called, but could not see them. Got Adair to put off his motion. 26th. House—Adair's Bill about Quakers." To this subject his attention had been called by one of his constituents—"When you have abolished the Slave Trade, pray think of the poor Friends in York Castle for the non-payment of their tithes." The relief given by the present Bill consisted of two parts; first providing for the summary recovery of tithes without the vexation of the present law; and secondly allowing their simple affirmation to be received as evidence in criminal as well as civil causes. It passed the House of Commons upon the 10th of May.

Another measure in which he took an active part was the Bill for regulating curates' stipends. "Felt greatly for them, but durst not say much of what I felt on its true grounds." His correspondence at this time shows the care which he had taken to learn the actual merits of the case, and in committee he proposed that one sixth of the income of all benefices exceeding £450 per annum, where the rector was non-resident, should be added to the curates' stipend.

This provision, which would have checked the greatest evils of non-residence, was lost on a division.[66] But his main business in the House until the close of the session was the Slave-carrying Bill; into which he endeavoured to insert such additional restrictions as should raise the price, and so promote the better treatment, of the traders' miserable cargo.

When the question came before the House of Commons, many of his ordinary opponents declared their approbation of the measure. "Slave-carrying Bill—Sir William Young, Barham, Lushington, Rose, and Ellis with us. General Tarleton forced to oppose us."[67] "There," said the General, pointing to some of his Liverpool constituents in the gallery, "there are my masters." "Counted out—36, with Pitt by the West Indians." The same tactics were twice afterwards successful. "Counted out. Sadly disturbed both to-night and last night. I find it too late to do any thing before the dissolution."[68] "This week I have occasionally felt a sinful anger about the Slave-carrying Bill, and the scandalous neglect of its friends."[69] The success of our West Indian expeditions had disposed Mr. Pitt to adopt Dundas's system of colonial acquisition. This fatal policy Mr. Wilberforce laboured to oppose; and he gladly therefore seized an opportunity of confidential intercourse afforded by the termination of the session. On the day after the prorogation they went together "tête-à-tête

[66] Ayes 14, Noes 33.
[67] Diary, May 11.
[68] Ib. May 13.
[69] Journal, May 15.

to Cambridge. Dined at Chesterford—much talk—he patriotic—Prince of Wales talked over Thurlow, &c. Supped at R.'s—what a bishop in embryo!"[70] Pitt's conversation determined me to go off to attend to Beverley and Hull."

His influence in his native town might, it was hoped, if he were on the spot, secure the return of two of Mr. Pitt's supporters. On Saturday the writs were out, and he therefore "set off for Hull, and having four horses, got at half past one to Brigg. Stanhope at Spittal. Gamaliel Lloyd told me that he thought the war was now going on gloriously; that we were likely to be surrounded with constitutions founded upon popular rights, and should have a just and real representation. Lunacy!"[71] At Brigg he complains that there was "no service on the Sunday morning, and the people sadly lounging about. Stanhope filling my head with election matters."[72] "I was in hopes of a day of religious retirement before my bustle, but God has ordered it otherwise. I fear I have been too ready to enter into election matters; yet I feel the emptiness of worldly things, and am, I trust, this day in some degree thirsting after the water of life."[73] "Alas, what earnestness do I see around me to secure a transitory interest! what carelessness when eternity is in question!"[74] "Let me pray earnestly for grace to stand firm within, amidst all the turmoil into which I

[70] Diary, May 20. [71] Ib. May 21. [72] Journal.
[73] Ib. [74] To William Hey Esq.

am about to enter. How much vanity have I felt in myself from the situation in which I stand in the county? It is all the unmerited mercy of God—can I be vain? I go to earnest prayer, and would endeavour after dedication of myself to God in Christ through the Holy Spirit." [75]

Early on Monday morning he arrived at Hull. "To the Bench with Sam. Thornton. He sure, and all sure for him. Canvassing quietly, forbidding show, flags, &c. Discontent scarce began to show itself. Saw Sykes's. Agreed to support Stanhope. Dined at home, and after dinner to Sir Samuel Standridge's—ship people, wrights, &c. there. T. friendly and vain. Blaydes and Bateman had sent off to Pitt to dispatch a man. I sent off a messenger to him to stop any one, and desire all possible support for Stanhope." "The next morning canvassing with Thornton and Stanhope. The former sure, the latter successful in canvassing. Some gathering discontents. Wednesday. Doubtful how to act about my own election, and half inclined to dash into the North Riding. Wrote many letters. Great discontent now against Sam. Thornton. Colonel Burton came with pomp to Hull, which made his economy more unpopular. Thursday. Sir Charles Turner came to Hull. I going to Holderness, but put it off till afternoon. All the ribands bought up—people delighted—a great row, &c. Dined at home after writing much, and into Holderness. Called on

[75] Journal.

Bethell and Constable; he very frank about Roman Catholics not enjoying political rights, and would take no part, &c. Got back late. People riotous; but Thornton having to-night 800 promises, deemed by all perfectly safe. Stanhope also. Friday.[76] Election day. Thornton led off the poll, but Sir Charles Turner soon passed him, and he last. Thornton's colours torn out, and not suffered to appear—people abusive—Sir Charles idolized. At night numbers were, Turner 661, Stanhope 547, Thornton 478. Sykes's extremely distressed at the idea of throwing out Thornton. Saturday. Thornton brought in with difficulty — Turner 884, Thornton 734, Stanhope 715."

It was now time that he should attend to his own election, and he set "off" accordingly "for York through Beverley—saw Bernard, found all friendly, and he told me that he had not seen one single freeholder who was against me. Got into Philip Langdale's chaise to Weighton—dined in the carriage, and on to York." "I hold your seat," Dr. Burgh had written to him,[77] "to be as secure as if the county were your own private borough, yet cross accidents may involve you in expense; so keep your eyes about you, and mark events." His colleague had for some months determined to retire. "After what has passed," Mr. Duncombe had told him in the winter,[78] "having differed from my constituents, and differing from them still upon a great constitutional question, you

[76] May 27. [77] May 16. [78] Jan. 7.

will naturally think that it will not be agreeable to them that I should offer myself at the ensuing election, and certainly, according to the principles I hold, it would not be so to myself." The increasing infirmities of age enforced this determination, and Mr. Duncombe now retired from public life. Three candidates [79] came forward to contest the seat which he had vacated, all men of wealth and influence; and though none of them opposed Mr. Wilberforce, yet their struggle would of course involve him in the trouble and expense of a contested election. He was received at York with the most hearty greeting; and assurances of universal support poured in from every quarter. "'Are you for Wilberforce?' is the first question generally asked at Leeds; and he would have a sorry life of it hereabouts, who would undertake to canvass without making you a sine quâ non." [80] "Dined at tavern—Withers the recorder, very kind—Preston, Stanhope,—others came dropping in gradually—evening, much talk." [81]

On Sunday, May the 29th, after having attended public worship in the Minster, he withdrew his thoughts from the bustling scene around him, to commune with himself. "This last has been a very hurrying week, little time for devotion and Scripture neglected, for which I ought to have found time. But I thank God that I hope I have desired and

[79] Charles Duncombe Esq. Walter Fawkes Esq. and the Hon. Henry Lascelles.

[80] Letter from W. Cookson Esq. May 27.

[81] Diary.

wished for a quiet opportunity of communing with Him and my own heart, and to-day I adore with some degree of gratitude that gracious Providence which has led me all my days in ways that I knew not, and has given me so much favour with men. It is His work. His be the glory. I hope I really feel how entirely it is His doing; that I have nothing of which I can boast or be proud; that it is what I could never have effected by my own counsels or might. Oh may I be enabled to be grateful, (duly I cannot be,) and to devote myself first to God's glory, and then diligently to the service of those constituents who are so kind to me." [82]

The nomination for the county followed upon Monday morning. "Day windy and rainy—I spoke but moderately—Milnes very civil—high eulogium—immense majority for me. Most, even of opposition, spoke favourably of me. Meeting over in two hours. Opposition for Fawkes most active. Tavern, and talked with many till dinner. All candidates wishing to bear me harmless, and conference for the purpose, which adjourned till seven o'clock; previous meeting of friends. Evening most distressing—all the West Riding men wishing me to join Lascelles. Inconsistent with my declaration, thought Robert Broadley, T. Williamson, Creyke, Stanhope, Sir Robert Hildyard, and myself. Wharton highly complimentary to me. Much distressed to resist the importunity of friends to join. Lloyd declared that a motion about to be

[82] Journal.

made that they should leave me. I more cool, thank God, than usual. What a mercy I did not yield! my character would have had a lasting blot. At length at eleven o'clock, when all conference vain, Fawkes sent word by Sir George Armytage that he would spend no more of Lascelles's money than necessary, and declined. Duncombe had resigned before dinner. I told room of friends; they roared, &c. and still roaring till very late. I called at Lascelles's, and then Fawkes's—he civil and composed. Sat to a cool chat with Williamson, Creyke, &c. Bacon Frank had anticipated Fawkes's resigning." "Next day," he says, "people going away. Drew up Chas. Duncombe's advertisement, and told him he must come to election. Dined Archbishop's—Sir George Armytage told me the anecdote was true of Brandling's receiving letter promising Duke of Norfolk's, Devonshire's, and Lord Fitzwilliam's support to Fawkes, and not opening it till next day; it would have changed their resolution. Sir George said it was Harewood's long purse."[83]

The election was to follow in a week, and he gladly withdrew himself from York to the quiet of the country. "Travelled to Creyke's, who had been very kind, and pressed me. Felt excessively comfortable, from calm after fortnight's turbulence and bustle. Much pleased with Creyke's family peace and rationality."[84] "I have had hurried devotions lately, and scarce any Scripture reading, yet in general my mind in better frame than sometimes. Much fatigue

[83] Diary, May 31. [84] Ib. June 1.

—little or no anxiety about these things—grateful, I trust, to God."

Upon the 7th of June he was "earlyish at York Castle, about half past ten. All, except five or six, West Riding people. Colonel Lloyd's horse nearly thrown down by the people's tearing off ribands. Strickland earnest to know if I had joined Lascelles, and angry at sheriff's putting up names jointly. Bacon Frank moved, Strickland seconded me. I spoke about twenty minutes very well, and people pleased. Dr. Tripp's 'God bless you, Wilberforce.'"[85] "I have heard so much of your speech," wrote Lord Carrington,[86] "that I would not have missed seeing it for a great deal. It is a proof how much the effect of a speech depends upon the opinion entertained by the hearer of the sincerity and character of the speaker. Such a speech from Sheridan, if he had been member for the county of York, would have been ridiculous."

It was in a very different tone from the ordinary eloquence of a county hustings. "I should," he told them, "but feebly execute my task if I were to attempt to give expression to the various emotions of my heart. I trust that I may say they are virtuous emotions; they are grateful; they are humble. I feel deeply impressed with your kindness; but above all, I recognise with thankfulness the hand of that gracious Providence which has caused my cup to overflow with blessings; which first raised me to an elevation I could never hope to have attained, has

[85] Diary. [86] July 10.

enabled me in some tolerable measure to discharge the duties of that important station, and disposed your minds to reward my services with so disproportionate a share of favour. You will not wonder at my being serious; even gratitude like mine is necessarily serious."

After sketching the principles and plan of his past public conduct, he pointed out to them the great importance of their forming, as a county, a right and sober judgment upon the great public questions which from time to time arose. "It is your part," he told them, "to keep a watchful eye on the course of public affairs; not to interfere at all in ordinary cases, but only when weighty and solemn occasions call for such an intervention; and then to deliberate with caution, to determine with gravity, to act with decision. If such be your conduct, the effect can hardly be overstated. I say not this to flatter you by an exaggerated representation of your political importance; it is mere matter of fact, the very language of sober history. Can I forget that glorious day, when not many months ago I met you in this place. Then you assumed your proper character—and what was the result? A spirit of delusion seemed to have gone forth through the metropolis and its vicinity, and there was no foreseeing what might be the consequences of the growing evil. In this state of things you were called together. I knew that I might justly rely on you in such a crisis; nor was my expectation disappointed: from that mo-

ment the storm was hushed; from one end of the kingdom to the other your voice was heard, and wherever it came the friends of order and the constitution took courage. The enemies of civil peace hung their heads confounded." His speech was followed by the chairing, always a tumultuous scene at York. "People whilst half down Coney Street tore off the ribands from my chair, and almost threw me down—safely out. Dined tavern—about sixty-five or seventy. Mr. G.'s coarse, indecent toast—I would not give it. Sheriff well behaved." The secret of his hidden strength is simply recorded in the following line:—"Home about seven and prayed. Much affected, and shed many tears."

After some doubts "where to fix" himself "for the interval until the meeting of parliament, in which time" he "hoped to resume" his "book," he determined upon Buxton, where he resolved "when pretty well, to apply vigorously to business."[87] Before fixing here, he made a hasty progress through various parts of Yorkshire. His first visit was to his mother's house at Hull. "She seems to olden even now, but better than when at Scarborough last summer. Thomas Thompson dined with us. Too loose and free in morals about Hedon voters and election management; but people here by no means shy of election subject, which shows they have not done what they think wrong."[88] "Milner preached—very practical and good. Joseph Milner dined with us—simple and pleasant. At night my

[87] Diary. [88] Ib. June 9.

mother affected at parting, and whispered 'Remember me in your prayers.' Milner thinks her weaker."[89]

Early the next morning he started for the West Riding; where in the middle of the week he says, "All this dining publicly and incessant company is sad work. Oh that I might really feel a deep desire of something better! I don't know that I could well have avoided it, after the kind conduct of my friends towards me; yet I almost think I would if it were now to do over again. I seem to be gaining credit on false pretences."[90] "I have done less good than usual this time in the way of religious conversation and giving books. Yet to do so is really hard."[91]

On the 26th of June he was established for a time at Buxton, whence he writes a few days later to Mr. Macaulay, then Governor at Sierra Leone.

TO ZACHARY MACAULAY ESQ.

"Buxton, July 3, 1796.

"My dear Sir,

Whilst I was taking a contemplative walk this morning, I rambled in thought to Sierra Leone, and my mind was naturally led to consider the providential dispensations of that Almighty Being, whose infinitely complicated plan embraces all His creatures, and who especially leads, and directs, and supports all those who in their different walks through this multifarious maze of life, are pursuing in His faith and fear

[89] Diary, Sunday, 12.
[90] Journal, Wednesday night. Wakefield, June 15.
[91] Journal, June 19. Halifax.

the objects which He has respectively assigned them. Here they often know little of each other, but they are all members of the same community, and at length they shall be all collected into one family; and peace, and love, and joy, and perfect unalloyed friendship, shall reign without intermission or abatement. Perhaps you will then introduce me to some of your sable subjects, whom I never shall see in this world; and I may bring you personally acquainted with others, to whom I have talked of your labours and sufferings in our common cause. 'The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.' It always presents to my mind a most august idea—the praises of God arising from every nation, and kindred, and people, where His name is known, and blending, as they rise, into one note and body of harmony. How much ought this to stimulate us to enlarge the bounds of our Redeemer's kingdom!

"Monday evening, July 4th. I reproach myself for not having written to you sooner, but you may guess how I have been employed for some time past. I have great reason to be thankful to God, for having disposed the hearts of almost all my constituents to receive me with favour. It was the more pleasing, because I have been rather deficient in personal attentions, and of course have never attended any of their races, or indeed of their other public meetings. Even those who differed from me on political grounds, did me the honour to say, that by my diligent discharge of the business of the

county, I deserved to be re-elected. My colleague having resigned on account of his declining health, there was the prospect of a contest for the vacant succession, which, if it had gone forward, could hardly have failed to involve me in much trouble and expense. Happily (I may be justly allowed to say *happily*, on public, no less than personal grounds) two of the three candidates resigned, and I regained my seat quietly. I have since been paying my compliments and thanks through a part of the West Riding, and by Mr. Hey's advice I am now drinking the waters of this place. I believe that every one likes to hear what absent friends are doing, and therefore I enter into detail, trusting that I do not flatter myself in persuading myself that you esteem me one amongst that number.

"You will have heard from Tom Babington that Matthew at length has 'fallen asleep.' I sincerely believe that a purer spirit scarce ever (I had nearly said never) winged its flight to heaven. Your intelligence concerning the Foulah mission is highly illustrative of the character of Methodism, and seems to me to teem with practical consequences. I have as yet only seen the account contained in your letter to me. Yet we must not be discouraged. But this event confirms me in the wish to set up an institution for educating and maintaining missionaries, of which a few of ourselves should be the managers. Your communications are always acceptable to me, but knowing how much you are occupied, I beg you will not over-work yourself in writing to me.

"You are aware of my complaint in my eyes, which compels me to be a bad correspondent, and will do me the justice to believe, that but for that impediment you would hear from me much more frequently. Any Slave Trade intelligence is of course particularly acceptable. Our affairs in the West Indies now wear somewhat of a less gloomy aspect, but I expect no good from that quarter whilst our empire is founded in blood. Farewell, my dear sir. Believe me always, with cordial esteem and affection,

Yours very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His life at Buxton was, as far as possible, that of a student. "Wednesday. Delightful weather. Thorntons went to Bagshawe's. I declined—causâ waste of time. Resumed tract."[92] And again, "On my tract in the morning with some spirit."[93] "Talking over my tract with some friends, but do not find much help from them."[94] "I have this week read Scripture (the Acts) constantly and seriously, and have had much new light thrown on them. I have felt at times, when walking, &c. a sense of the presence of God; but in company have been vain and gay, and I fear not duly attentive to the edification of friends. Oh how different am I from what I advise others to be, and how much like the lukewarm Christians I am condemning!"[95] "I have great reason," he wrote at this

[92] Diary, June 29.
[93] Ib. July 9.
[94] Ib. July 2.
[95] Journal, July 3.

time[96] to Hannah More, "to be thankful for getting through all the bustle of my election so well. It wore, so far as trouble and expense went, a much more unpromising aspect at one period. As it was, I do not suppose it will turn out to have cost me so much as £100; so you may draw on me the more freely.

"For the last month I have been drinking the waters of this place, and have received benefit. I have here resumed my pen, which had laid quiet near two years, and hope, if it please God to spare my health, that I shall finish my work (I hate the term, but don't know what to style it) this recess. Seriously and honestly, you expect too much from it. I do not like it so well as I did. However, if God pleases, He can give the increase. I rejoice to hear of your going on prosperously in your reforming operations. You have indeed cause for thankfulness at being so much blessed in your endeavours. What a delightful idea is that, which I trust will be realized, of your meeting from time to time in a better world, those whom you have been the means of enlightening with the knowledge of a Saviour, and the descendants, from generation to generation, of those whose hereditary piety originated under your *ministry*. 'Ride on prosperously.' It is the contemplation of a scene like this, which refreshes the mind, when wearied by Archduke Charles and General Moreau. Alas! no signs of humiliation. God scourges, but we feel it not."

[96] July 25.

CHAPTER XIII.

JULY 1796 TO OCTOBER 1797.

Buxton—War becomes unpopular—Return to London to see Pitt—Jeremy Bentham—Letter to Macaulay—Plans for the East Indies—St. Bartholomew's Hospital—Sunday drilling—Bath—Work on Christianity—Bank stops payment—Ellis's motion on Slave Trade—Work on Christianity published—Its great effect—Burke—Sir Charles Middleton—Return to Bath—Mutiny—"Wicked Williams"—Motion for Abolition again lost—Wilberforce's marriage—Death of his brother-in-law—Correspondence on the Slave Trade—Death of Hon. E. J. Eliot.

THE advice of Mr. Hey had now fixed him for some weeks at Buxton, amidst a crowd of other visitors. "The weather delightful for Buxton—began the waters yesterday."[1] He dined commonly at the public table, and mixed much with the miscellaneous group around him. "I hope," replies his mother to one of his descriptions, "that you have improved in taste and politeness by your elegant companions. Your sister wishes for a view of the group." He had now learned to mingle with his natural gaiety a "hidden seriousness" of spirit, and his private memoranda show

[1] Diary, July 1.

the care he took in mixed society to observe his rule of always "leading people to talk upon the subjects with which they are best acquainted."

"State of Ireland.—The Irish gentry (sensible, cool men) entertain very serious apprehensions of the Roman Catholics; say they keep a register of the forfeited lands; that their priests have little influence over them; the menial servants commonly Roman Catholics; masters cannot depend on them; if the French were to land 10,000 men, they would infallibly rise. The hatred and bad opinion which the lower Roman Catholics entertain against the Protestants, and particularly the English, is very great. It seems impossible to end quietly unless an union takes place. As wealth is diffused, the lower orders will learn the secret of their strength."

"Manchester.—All the places of worship in Manchester taken together would not contain, if brim full, 20,000 people. The place contains 70,000 souls; so that calculating twice as many go sometimes, it leaves 30,000 quite unfrequenters. Church attendance of better kind of people much diminished of late, particularly in afternoon. (From Mr. Clowes.)

"Sabbath.—I observe that Sunday is a more frequent travelling day than any other with the merchants. They confess that religion has declined. Public morals.—Dr. Percival thinks morality lowered at Manchester within the last twenty or thirty years. The manners of Leeds remarkably frugal, sober, and commercial. None of

the merchants spend money, and it would be discreditable to attend public places. An increasing evil at Sheffield is, that the apprentices used to live with the master and be of the family; now the wives are grown too fine ladies to like it; they lodge out and are much less orderly.

"Heard Miss Seward repeat and read Cornaro, Translations from Horace. Called upon her several times—Erskine much with her—his free conversation with Milner about religion."[2] "He tells me he has had sixty-six retainers off his circuit at three hundred guineas each." "Here is Miss D—Vultus nimium lubricus, miseri quibus, &c. Will she turn out well?—but eighteen, poor lass!"

"Miss Seward went on Friday. Erskine, Milner, and I too much with her—flattering her, &c. I called once to get serious talk, but in vain. She commended the preacher at the rooms. I said I liked sermons better which made people uneasy."[3] "To the disgrace of the Duke of Devonshire," he writes, "and I must say of several others, there is still no church here, but there is at length some inchoate rumour of an intention of building one."

Greater retirement would have been his choice. "The chief inconvenience of this place, is that one cannot have a short uninterrupted walk—people join one." He wanted leisure to complete his long-projected work. "Sorry," he says[4]

[2] Diary, Aug. 22. [3] Ib. Aug. 28.

[4] Journal, July 31.

when called to Hull by the indisposition of his mother, "to quit my tract, which I wished to finish this recess." The sight of the open infidelity of France, and dissatisfaction with the state of things at home, made him more earnest to deliver speedily his solemn protest against the prevailing standard of religious principle and practice. "Public affairs look worse and worse. In circumstances like ours I feel a diffidence in our rulers, and a contempt for their wisdom and resources, which language cannot express. Our national sins force themselves into my mind. Would to God I could see any symptoms of national humiliation; I should then begin to take courage. Till then I scarce dare hope for better tidings. This place is so full of acquaintance, that though I pay myself the compliment of declaring that I manage my time pretty well, I am unavoidably more taken off from my writing-table than I wish. I believe you know my infirmity, that I cannot compose with any vigour in the evening, so that my season for solid work, like a winter's day in the Orkneys, is very much contracted. However, I crawl forward. Our friend the Dean[5] is tolerable, and much amused, and not a little amusing." [6]

His Sundays were spent in comparative retirement; and before he quitted Buxton, more than one was specially devoted to a thoughtful review of "the notables in my life, for which I should return thanks, or be otherwise suitably affected." [7] "The singular

[5] Dr. Milner. [6] Letter to William Hey Esq. Aug. 27.
[7] Journal, Sept. 4.

accident, as it seemed to me, of my asking Milner to go abroad with me in 1784. How much it depended on contingencies!—his coming to Hull with his brother; being known to my grandfather; distinguishing himself, &c. If he had been as ill as he was afterwards, or if I had known his character, we should not have gone together. "Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress' having fallen in my way so providentially whilst abroad, given by Unwin to Mrs. Smith, thence coming to Bessy, and by her taken abroad. My being raised to my present situation just before I became acquainted with the truth, and one year and a half before I in any degree experienced its power. This, humanly speaking, would not have taken place afterwards. What a mercy to have been born an Englishman, in the eighteenth century, of decently religious parents, with a fortune, talents, &c. Even Gibbon felt thankful for this; and shalt not thou praise the Lord, O my soul? My being providentially engaged in the Slave Trade business. I remember well how it was—what an honourable service. How often protected from evil and danger! kept from Norris's hand, and Kimber's . . furious West Indians . . two whole seasons together, Rolleston—and my coming away from Bath so providentially—the challenge never cleared up. My illness in the spring, which might have been fatal, well recovered from. My going into Yorkshire in the winter. My election over with little trouble and expense."

This enumeration is succeeded by a catalogue of various causes for humiliation, collected by a careful scrutiny of his past life. "And now," he ends, "I

can only throw myself upon the infinite compassion of Christ, and rely on His effectual grace. I am in myself most weak and vile. But do not I owe all to the goodness of God? It is Thou, O Lord, that hast given the very small increase there has been, and that must give all if there be more."

"Indeed, my dear Muncaster," he replies at this time to a friendly expostulation on his silence, "I do partly reproach myself for not occasionally dropping you a few lines, though I have had more writing on my hands, than my eyes, notwithstanding their being better than usual, have been equal to. Your letter of the 13th, received to-day, rouses me from my silence. Yet I have nothing comfortable to say. You know that it is my custom during the summer to banish politics, and not to resume the consideration of them till about a month before the meeting of parliament. But I am now forced from my philosophical arrangement, and compelled to look a little to the state of public affairs. Seldom have they offered a more gloomy spectacle. To me, I own, they wear a still darker aspect; because I see nothing of that proper temper of mind in our great men, which I should hail as the dawning of the day after a night of darkness and horror. No humiliation, no recognition of the providence of God. The same unwearied round of diversions, as in seasons of the most uninterrupted prosperity. What is this but practical atheism? And coupled with the Slave Trade, and with the wall of brass by which we bar out the entrance of light

and civilization into India, does it not compose such an account, when estimated by the Scripture standard, as may well strike terror into the heart of every serious man? Blessed be God, who offers us a peace beyond the reach of human accidents. Never, never was there a time when we were more clamorously called on to secure it.

"But whither am I running on? Let me pause; for I could pour out of the fulness of my heart in this way, till I had exhausted your patience and my own eyesight. Honest Duncombe! I am glad he was with you, because I am sure he would enjoy himself; and your benevolent mind would rejoice in seeing and making him happy. If *Burghos* be still with you, remember me most kindly to him. Is it his first fit of the gout? I went for a fortnight to Hull to attend my mother. She is very much broken indeed in body and nerves, (not at all in intellects,) but I think in no present danger; and her state of mind is such as to afford me real pleasure. It does not often happen in a person of her age, but I verily think she has materially improved in more ways than one (particularly in self-government) within the last three or four years. Milner I have brought back with me from Hull. My kind respects to Lady Muncaster—and farewell. I begin to have very querulous letters from the West Riding, impatient for peace.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Buxton, August 18.

"I understand it is not probable we shall meet in September, but very likely in October. Surely you *must* come up. Erskine is here."

The war was now becoming universally unpopular. "Letters from the West Riding—they begin to be sadly dissatisfied about the war—alas! selfish—from the short stagnation of trade."[8] "A year ago," says his correspondent, "trade was good, and we were all good friends of government. We were content to let the Austrians and French cut each other's throats as long as they pleased. The capture of Frankfort and Leghorn have quite opened our eyes. We now see that war is a great evil." "My good Wilberforce," wrote Mr. Henry Duncombe,[9] "pray make Pitt conclude a peace, the country is quite tired of fine speeches." At this very moment a "letter from Pitt about a direct treaty with Paris, Spanish war, &c."[10] cut short his stay at Buxton. "Off early (Sept. 15th) for London, though grieved to pass Yoxall Lodge without a call. Prompted by the possible hope of doing good in pressing Pitt to peace—not to stipulate for islands—perhaps include Slave Trade in treaty. 17th. Hoped to see Pitt to-day. Got to Palace Yard by half-past five—all well, and I home in safety. Praise the Lord, O my soul. A good deal moved by serious ideas.

18th. Sunday. Oh may I pray earnestly to God to proportion my strength to my trials, and to enable me

[8] Diary, Aug. 21. [9] Oct. 15. [10] Diary, Sept. 9.

to grow continually in His faith, and fear, and love. I am plunging into a depth of trials, O help me.[11] 19th. To Holwood, to have a full political discussion—Joe Smith came there—he, Pitt, and I—full talk of all politics—pleased with my interview on the whole. 20th. Pitt forced to go to town, so I did too. Dined in Downing Street—Rose, Pitt, and I—much politics—tide of success is turned, and Archduke is all—but God forgotten. I have been resenting to Pitt the idea of employing Jackson to negociate with France—every body feels it, but few dare tell Pitt any such thing. People will not so much believe him in earnest in the treaty as if he sent a more important character. The Speaker agrees with me that some important man should go; and even offered to go himself." These remonstrances at last proved effectual: "Jackson was quite held a proper man for this embassy, and Pitt would scarce hear it questioned, but now it is thought ridiculous to hold him fit, and Lord Malmesbury is to go."[12]

On his road from Buxton, he had been amused by a characteristic letter, in which Jeremy Bentham urged him to volunteer his services as chief negociator, offering his own assistance in quality of secretary. He was at this time as intimate with Mr. Bentham as the disagreement of their tastes rendered possible. "Bentham," he says,[13] "(inter alia,) professes to have no liking for poetry." "Odd enough were the parties I then met once or twice

[11] Journal. [12] Diary, October. [13] Ib. Sept. 6.

every winter at Bentham's house, at which his brother General Bentham, Lord St. Helen's, Abbot, Romilly, old Professor Christian, and myself were the ordinary guests."[14]

This intimacy had grown out of his attempts to assist Mr. Bentham when the failure of his "panopticon" had involved him in pecuniary losses. The plan of this penitentiary greatly pleased Mr. Dundas, and he obtained Mr. Pitt's sanction for the experiment. Thus encouraged, Mr. Bentham had entered into contracts for the erection of the building, when Lord Spencer complained loudly, and successfully, of its vicinity to his estate. It proved no easy matter to find another site, whilst the delay involved Mr. Bentham in serious responsibilities. Mr. Wilberforce took up his cause with zeal; and applied, amongst others, to the Chapter of St. Peter's, Westminster, in furtherance of his design. "I shall never forget Horsley's[15] keen glance, when in the course of our discussion he asked me, 'Mr. Wilberforce, do you think that Mr. Pitt is in earnest in the business?' Never was any one worse used than Bentham. I have seen the tears run down the cheeks of that strong-minded man through vexation at the pressing importunity of creditors and the insolence of official underlings, when day after day he was begging at the Treasury for what was indeed a mere matter of right. How indignant did I often feel, when I saw him thus treated by men infinitely his

[14] Con. Mem. [15] Bishop Horsley, then Dean of Westminster.

inferiors! I could have extinguished them. He was quite soured by it, and I have no doubt that many of his harsh opinions afterwards were the fruit of this ill treatment."[16] "A fit site," at last wrote the weary man,[17] "obtainable for my purpose, without a single dissentient voice, is that of the golden tree, and the singing water, and after a three years' consideration I beg to be excused searching for it."—"Bentham's hard measure"—"Bentham cruelly used"—"Jeremy Bentham, suo more"—are Mr. Wilberforce's docketings upon the letters which at this time passed frequently between them. Some of them are not a little singular.—"Kind sir," he writes[18] in one, "the next time you happen on Mr. Attorney-General[19] in the House or elsewhere, be pleased to take a spike, the longer and sharper the better, and apply it to him by way of memento that the Penitentiary-Contract Bill has, for I know not what length of time, been sticking in his hands; and you will much oblige,

your humble servant to command,

JEREMY BENTHAM.

"N. B. A corking pin was yesterday applied by Mr. Abbot."

At the close of September Mr. Wilberforce communicates to his friend Mr. Macaulay, the governor of Sierra Leone, the aspect of affairs at home.

[16] Con. Mem.
[17] Aug. 18, to W. Wilberforce Esq.
[18] Feb. 28, 1797.
[19] Sir John Scott, now Earl of Eldon.

"London, Sept. 29, 1796.

"My dear Sir,

Though I have nothing particular to communicate to you, I am unwilling to suffer the vessel to sail without a few lines assuring you of my friendly remembrance. We are called to town earlier than usual to attend parliament, and for one I come up most reluctantly. The political horizon wears a truly gloomy aspect; not perhaps that any great material mischief is to be apprehended immediately, but there are a number of black clouds gathering around us. Yet I should not feel dejected if I could hope that we might expect to be favoured by the good providence of God; but *that* I dare not hope, forming my judgments of the future from what appears in Scripture to have been the course of the Divine proceedings with regard to other nations. Above all, we do not recognise the hand of God, though so plainly lifted up. A neighbouring country has been severely punished for its infidelity and wickedness; (for to these it would not be difficult to trace the misfortunes of France;) this we see, but we discover no sign of the emotions it ought to excite in us. There is nothing like humiliation, nothing like an acknowledgment of the government of God. We speak in lofty and vaunting terms of our fleets and armies, and profess to rely on them for the success of our endeavours; when defeated or frustrated in our designs, we talk of ill fortune, of the uncertainty of

military operations, of the misconduct of commanders, but not of the chastising arm of Providence. In all the higher circles there is even increasing dissipation and profusion.

"But I will leave this topic, and not lower your spirits by my gloomy speculations. Our government has been for some time desirous of negociating for peace; they have made repeated efforts in vain, and really, according to the common principles of worldly conduct, they might almost have been excused, if they had in disgust desisted from any further efforts; but they have not, and on the contrary they are trying again at this very moment. It is difficult to account for the insolent demeanour of the executive Directory towards us; perhaps it may arise from their conceiving that unless they were to bluster, the Councils might charge them with sacrificing the national honour, and they may (and not without reason) apprehend that their heads might pay the forfeit of any true or false charge of this nature. Spain, you will learn from the public prints, has in substance declared war against us. The real cause doubtless is, that the Duke d'Alcunha (created Prince of the Peace) is afraid that if France should break with Spain he would immediately be displaced, and probably punished; whereas the going to war with us will only be attended with bad effects to his country. In fact it is not unlikely, if this war goes on, that ere long there will be an end of the Spanish monarchy.

"I shall, undoubtedly, in the course of the present

session, renew my motion for Abolition, but if the war continues I fear it will be in vain. But I am strongly of opinion that the expense both of blood and treasure which government has incurred from its West India establishments is so monstrous, that when stated and properly pressed on the public attention, it will produce a rooted disgust of those possessions; and if the West Indians oppose us as determinedly as they have done heretofore, I am disposed to endeavour to create this impression. I have another idea about the Slave Trade, which I dare not here put down, not being sure of the safe arrival of my letter.

"I have been scribbling in great haste, and amidst many interruptions and much conversation; but I trust you will excuse all this, and that my service, such as it is, will be acceptable. I beg you will never think it necessary to write to me; I know how extremely you are occupied, and your communications to Mr. H. Thornton I may consider as made to myself; besides, I am not in a situation which so much wants to be sustained by the kind attentions of absent friends. Farewell, my dear sir, may God bless and preserve you. I am ever, with cordial esteem and regard,

yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His design he states soon after more distinctly, when writing to Lord Muncaster.[20] "I have an idea, about

[20] Letter to Lord Muncaster, Oct. 8.

which I am very busy, of availing ourselves of the circumstance that all the slave trading powers (except one of no consideration) will be brought together, for trying at a general convention to abolish. Dundas is favourable to it, and I am very sanguine of its success, if proposed. Less sanguine, however, in my hopes of peace now."

"Very busy seeing Pitt and Dundas about Abolition convention plan, and East India missions—pleased with Dundas's candour."[21] Having failed three years before in his endeavours to obtain a national provision for christianizing India, he was eager to forward those individual efforts which, though a poor substitute for his proposal, were all that could at present be attempted. Mr. Haldane and some other Scotch gentlemen were at this time desirous of engaging in such a mission, and he exerted himself to obtain Mr. Dundas's assent to the undertaking. In this he would probably have succeeded, if their extreme political opinions had not alarmed the government. "I am sorry to find them all perfect democrats, believing that a new order of things is dawning, &c. Haldane very open. I told him I thought that he by imprudence had injured the cause with Dundas."[22] Much as he disliked their views, and earnestly as he "argued against their revolutionary principles, in a long talk about governments," he "yet, on every ground, regretted the decision of Mr. Dundas." "I could not persuade him; though, as I told him, it is on your own grounds the best

[21] Diary, Oct. 8.

[22] Ib. Oct. 4.

thing you can do. In Scotland such a man is sure to create a ferment. Send him therefore to the back settlements to let off his pistol in vacuo."[23]

Though he was full of business all this autumn, yet he mixed as much as usual in society; and his private memoranda of this date record some heads of interesting conversations. "Disengaged myself from Lord St. Helen's to dine with Pitt. A note to meet Speaker; but, to my surprise, found a grand dinner—sixteen or seventeen people. Late there—an unprofitable day."[24] "Friday. Lord St. Helen's dined with me tête-à-tête—pleasant day—free conversation—much politics and information."[25]

"Franklin signed the Peace of Paris in his old spotted velvet coat (it being the time of a court mourning, which rendered it more particular). What, said my friend the negociator,[26] is the meaning of that harlequin coat? It is that in which he was abused by Wedderburne." "He showed much rancour and personal enmity to this country—would not grant the common passports for trade, which however easily got from Jay or Adams."

"In the Nootka sound business,"[27] says the person who dined with me to-day, "we were by much too ready to go to war—a word and a blow, or rather a word without a blow. The Spanish minister said,

[23] Con. Mem. [24] Diary, Sept. 28. [25] Ib. Sept. 30.

[26] David Hartley, his colleague for Hull, signed the treaty of peace with America, Sept. 3, 1783.

[27] Lord St. Helen's was ambassador in Spain at the time of this dispute, A. D. 1790.

'Surely you wish to pick a quarrel with us, you must wish to go to war.'" "Yet I remember all the House, except Pulteney, were clear for the strong language, (I doubtful then, but felt unsupported,) and nobody thought that the conduct or language of Great Britain was liable to that interpretation."

"Windham was speaking at St. James's last winter of the bad precedent of leaving all the lands of France in possession of the usurpers. 'Why,' said Lord Palmerston, 'surely you can never expect to restore them.' Yes you might, if you could set up a king there."

"The Empress of Russia extremely fond of scribbling. In the Kiow and Crimea journey, which lasted seven months, she was for ever producing, earlyish in the morning, something she had scribbled after they had separated late the night before, concerning the events of the preceding day. The pieces were always burned. One day, when a play of her own writing in Russian was performing, St. Helen's and Potemkin talking near the Empress, the latter said, 'What miserable stuff!' The Empress insisted on knowing what had passed. She was told, and took it in a very good-humoured way:—'I write to entertain myself, and if that end is produced, it is all I want.' St. Helen's travelled in the same carriage with her."

The next day, being engaged to dine with the Solicitor-General,[28] "I felt," says the Diary,[29] "but moderate, and from regard to to-morrow, when I

[28] Sir John Mitford, afterwards Lord Redesdale.

[29] Saturday, Oct. 1.

wished to be in a good state for God's service, I sent an excuse." On Sunday, "I was asked to dine at Lord Hood's; how much more pleasant is a day of Christian solitude!"[30]

"Saw G. who full of Italian victory. I not much interested about it to-day (Sunday). Yesterday's large party at the Speaker's was but irrational—all the general talk boisterous. Why did I not try to talk with my next neighbour? My own fault."[31]

"Johnson, Langton told us, did not get up till some one called to rouse him, whether it was ten, eleven, twelve, or one o'clock. Johnson said, 'I am a very well-bred, well-mannered man.'"[32]

"On Wednesday, King the American minister, Eliot, Montagu, and Henry Thornton dined with me. Rational day."[33] "There are two ways, said Eliot, of telling a story. Gibbon was charged with having said, a fortnight before he took a place under Lord North, that the nation's affairs would never go on well till the minister's head was on the table of the House of Commons. Gibbon himself told the story, that he had said, till both North's and Fox's heads were on the table. Franklin seems, from King, not to be in good estimation in America. Thought a dishonest, tricking, hypocritical character; a free-thinker really, yet pretending to believe in the authority of Scripture. Witherspoon's memory is not held in high respect—thought turbulent,

[30] Journal.
[31] Diary, Sunday, Oct. 16.
[32] Diary.
[33] Ib.

and to have rather left his proper functions." "On Thursday, M. at dinner. His loose religious notions. Thought all sects equally acceptable to God—that error was innocent, sincerity all, &c. Alas!"[34]

He was at this time engaging in a new cause of charity. Private information led him to believe that great abuses secretly existed in some of our hospitals. "To St. Bartholomew's with Carrington and Sargent. Saw the treasurer and secretary, who like Manuel Ordonnez, (Gil Blas,) Director of Hospitals. Learned mode of applying for general meeting."[35] "Dr. —— breakfasted with me, on the subject of St. Bartholomew's. Much shocked at his account." Before taking further steps he communicated the charges to a leading physician of the day. "I can well believe them," was Dr. Pitcairne's answer, "for it was an Augean stable in my time." His suspicions being thus confirmed, he gave up much time this winter to the business, with eminent success. Of such employments he would often say, in later life, that they were among the most useful to which a young man of independent fortune could devote himself. "A meeting at St. Bartholomew's in the morning. We find it will be easy to have new rules, but that it would be hard to punish delinquents."[36]

Parliament met upon the 6th of October, and was soon the scene of acrimonious controversy. The new overtures for peace met of course with Mr. Fox's approbation, but the Bills for putting the country

[34] Diary. [35] Ib. Oct. 19. [36] Ib. Nov. 3.

into a proper state for resisting an expected French invasion were contested hotly. Against one of their proposed provisions Mr. Wilberforce protested in his private intercourse with Mr. Pitt. "It is intended I observe," he heard from Mr. Stillingfleet,[37] "that the supplemental corps of militia shall be trained on Sunday afternoon; this comes rather to remind than to solicit you to use all your influence to prevent the intended evil. When a like proposal was made by Lord Shelburne many years ago, I wrote to the present Bishop of London to beg him to interfere with the other bishops to prevent it, and received a most proper answer, that the obnoxious clause would be omitted." "Dundas," Mr. Wilberforce records,[38] "is now clear that it would shock the general morals of Scotland, to exercise their volunteers on Sunday; but I can scarce persuade Pitt, that in England it would, even in serious people, excite any disgust." The Bills themselves he supported strongly, and was more than once called up by the factious temper of the opposition. "I will not charge them," he said, Nov. 2nd, "with desiring an invasion, but I cannot help thinking that they would rejoice to see just so much mischief befall their country, as would bring themselves into office." The words were resented fiercely; and he "feared that" he "had gone too far against opposition, but Fox very good-natured."[39] "What you said," writes Dr. Cookson,[40] "is what

[37] Rev. J. Stillingfleet Rector of Hotham. [38] Diary.
[39] Ib, Nov. 3. [40] Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. Nov. 7.

every body thinks, but what no one else had the courage to speak out." In the midst of these harsh contentions, he writes to Mrs. Hannah More.

"House of Commons, Nov. 9. 1796.

"My dear Madam,

I have heard of the severe illness, with which it has pleased God to visit you, and I have received pleasure from hearing of your recovery. I trust you will still be spared to us, though I scarce know how to wish it, so far as you are yourself concerned, being persuaded that whenever you are called hence, it will be to the enjoyment of those pleasures, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. My dear madam, I think of you, and feel for you, with lively interest. How I respect your exertions, I would say to any one rather than to you; but to your feeling heart it will afford a cordial, to be assured that a friend looks through the bustling crowd with which he is hemmed in, and fixes his eye on you with complacency and approbation.—God knows that I wish to imitate your example, and to learn from you to seize the short intervals of tolerable ease and possible action, for acting for the suppression of vice and the alleviation of misery. May we each tread in our separate paths, and at length, having been graciously guided to our home through the mercy of our great Shepherd, may we meet in a better world, free from pain, and sickness, and sorrow, and live for ever in the exercise of all those kindly affections, which are now the balm of

life, though so often alloyed by the irritations to which we are here subject. I scribble amidst much interruption, but my heart is full of kindness to you, and I would not restrain my feelings.

"May God bless, and support, and strengthen you, is the hearty prayer of

yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Kind remembrances."

It was by "seizing short intervals of possible action," that with an infirm body he himself accomplished so much. During the hurry of his present London life, he had not wholly laid aside the preparation of his work on Christianity. "I wish it was done. My time has been exceedingly frittered away in general talk, which yet was right. My bad health really renders it requisite for me to have much sleep; but with God's help I will lessen the time spent in discussion, and thus redeem what I can for solid work. Meant to go out of town for a few days that my tract may go on; but from the time of getting up till near four o'clock never quiet or free from people on business —chiefly Bentham's affairs."[41] "Dined at Pitt's to talk over finance plan—Steele, Ryder, Mornington, Speaker, &c.—many minds—no determination."[42] "Walked two hours with St. Helen's. Dined Lord Chancellor's—Loughborough, Windham, Pitt, Lord

[41] Journal, Nov. 14. [42] Diary.

Chatham, Westmoreland, &c.—talk rather loose. I fear I not guarded and grave enough. Much talk about 'The Monk,' a novel by Lewis's son." "Long discussion after breakfast about finance—this useful, but no time for tract, which I wish to get on with. Eliot presses me much to go to the Bishop of Lincoln's for a few days, thinking it will answer many good purposes—that my tract may go on, &c."

Upon the 17th he set out for Buckden, and spent a week there, engaged chiefly upon his tract, "hospitably received, and spending a rational life."[43] But business soon brought him back to London and its multiplied engagements. "26th. Busy morning about finance, and tract. I hope to finish it for the press by the end of the Christmas recess; and mean as much as possible to redeem time for it in London: help me, O God! 28th. Town—(after tract a little, morning,) dined Bankes's quietly—Pitt had asked me on finance. To Pitt's, evening, where staid late—talked much politics, and found him very fair and honest. 29th. Staid in town for evening meeting at Pitcairne's.[44] Dined Pitt's to see Ellis from Paris—Lord Chatham, Spencer, Chancellor, Dundas, &c. Much intelligence from Ellis. 30th. St. Bartholomew's meeting, morning—then Chancellor's and Battersea Rise.

Dec. 1st. To town to meet Lascelles on a most absurd application from D. to ask Fox the name of the writer of a false account of Leeds' meeting. Whole morning lost in this. Dined Pitt's—on finance, to consult, but all

[43] Diary. [44] About St. Bartholomew's.

our consultation anticipated by success of altered plan. All in spirits, but no thanks to God. A great country this, &c." "8th. Dined before House — Eliot and De Lageard. Sudden attack on Pitt for Austrian money — spoke on the sudden and did good service—Fox severe. 9th. Busy, proclamation committee,—Battersea Rise, and busy all evening. 10th. To Grant's to meet Haldane and Frewen—much free and warm talk—I too sharp with Haldane. 14th. St. Bartholomew's, morning. Dinner to several before House. House on Austrian advance till very late. 16th. Morning—committees—House on La Fayette. I doubtful, amended the motion—strengthened by Henry Thornton's advice and concurrence—not quite clear either." He charged it upon the House as "the duty of a great assembly such as this, to look abroad into the world, and attend to the claims of misery wherever it be found."[45] He thought the case one of peculiar hardship, and was the more ready to interfere from La Fayette's past exertions on the Slave Trade question. But he took this part unwillingly. "Never did I rise to speak with more reluctance, I expected all the ridicule which followed; and when Dundas with a happy peculiarity of expression talked of my Amendment as designed to catch the '*straagling* humanity' of the House, there was a perfect roar of laughter. However, I felt sure that we were bound to use our influence with our allies to mitigate as far as it was possible the miseries of war."[46] It was

[45] Debate. [46] Con. Mem.

some reward for this determined disregard of ridicule, to receive long afterwards a special assurance of La Fayette's gratitude. "Tell him," was the message, "that in my life I never can forget the feeling with which I read that speech in the dreary dungeon of Olmutz."

"22nd. Busy this week about Militia and Cavalry Bills. House—went home with Dundas and Pitt, and staid awhile discussing — Mission business in hand. 23rd. Breakfasted early with Dundas and Eliot on Mission business; Dundas complying, and appointing us to dinner again, where Grant and David Scott also—sat long. Then Pitt's, with whom Bishop of Lincoln;—having just heard of Lord Malmesbury failing, and being ordered back—staid late, talking about it. 24th. Kept in town all morning, expecting House. Dined Bankes's quietly, then Pitt's, where with Mornington, Speaker, &c. read despatches. Went home heavy. 26th. Grant, Eliot, and Babington at dinner—consultation on East Indian missions, and discussing all evening. 27th. To town on business—Army and Navy Bills. Saw Pitt, and home to Battersea Rise—employed all evening. 28th. Thought of and read politics for to-morrow. 29th. Politics—Battersea Rise all day—talking politics with Henry Thornton. 30th. To town after political preparation. Dined Bankes's, and talked with him on the state of things—very doubtful—address on Lord Malmesbury's negociation—kept late in House. Pitt very earnest with me not to speak.

The business of the House of Commons closed with

this debate. "The recess for six weeks is commencing. I once meant to try to finish my tract, but I now rather think that, the time being too little for so very serious a work, I shall devote it to preparation for the House of Commons—improvement in speaking, which sadly neglected, and in knowledge. May God preserve me the while from vanity, and enable me to continue humble, and to devote all my faculties, powers, and studies to His service."[47] His plans were interrupted by a violent attack of sickness. "Sunday, Jan. 1st. Cecil's, morning—good sermon from Bean—very serious. Staid in town to be quiet and recollect matters."[48] "I have felt much comfort and some humiliation; what cause have I for it! My life, alas, has been sadly unprofitable, when my opportunities are considered. I would now humbly resolve to amend, and through God's grace live soberly, righteously, humbly, and godly. This year I have been preserved from many evils. What a black aspect do public affairs present! and what a lesson to us to make sure of a better inheritance!"[49] Monday, Jan. 2nd. Slept ill, and very indifferent—feared I was about to be as bad as the famous time," (1788,) "and suffered much—sent to Pitcairne. Had death, as probable, in view, and felt I hope resigned, but no ardour or warmth—confined for a few days."

By the middle of the following week he was sufficiently recovered to bear a journey, and at the

[47] Journal, Jan. 1.

[48] Diary, Jan. 1.

[49] Journal.

desire of his physicians set out for Bath. "It has pleased God of His great mercy to raise me up again from this attack, which threatened much; I then thought death probably near. Oh that I might now better employ the time it has pleased God to allow me! May I be enlightened, and purified, and quickened; and having sadly wasted my precious faculties even since my thinking more seriously, may I now more constantly act as an accountable creature, who may be called away suddenly to his reckoning."[50] This thought appears to have altered his intention of "putting off his tract" for a season of greater leisure, and he begins his stay at Bath with the determination of giving to it all the time which health and society allowed. "May I be enabled to engage in this busy scene with benefit to others, and without harm to myself. Oh that I may feel the power of Divine grace in my heart to fill me with love of God and of my fellow-creatures. Oh how much do I want! what unnumbered blessings do I receive at the hands of God, and how unequal is my return! Yet let me remember He has encouraged us to apply to Him for His Holy Spirit. Let him that is athirst come. Create then in me this sacred thirst, and satisfy it with that peace of God, which Thou only canst supply."[51]

He reached Bath upon the 14th of January, and dined that day with the "Miss Mores, who are all kindness, and have provided me excellent lodgings. Lord Galloway and his son. Lord Galloway talked incessantly

[50] Journal, Jan. 8. [51] Ib. Jan. 15.

two or three hours—useful and active, and how much better disposed than most of his rank—fond of Jeremy Taylor. Mrs. H. More gave his son Doddridge's 'Evidences,' and strongly recommended 'Rise and Progress of Religion.' Staid till night, and home to lodgings. Sunday. To Pump-room and church. Dr. Randolph—sensible sermon and good delivery. Dined alone. Jay's, evening. Monday. Rather interrupted by visitors—but water agrees admirably, thank God—though 'amici fures temporis,' I may well say. Dined at Lord Kenyon's. Evening, called at Hannah More's. She gave me a long account of her being hurt at N.'s coldness—grievous pity that he should have such a manner, though she takes it too much as if a man of tender and prompt feelings had done so. Alas, how, on earth, are even the best liable to misconstrue, and be misconstrued! Tuesday. Busy enough. Dined Gordon's. He and Mrs. Gordon rational—much talk about poor. Wednesday. As usual, dined York House.—Chancellor. Queen's birth-day. Dr. B. queer, and slyly says ill-natured things. I thought he seemed unhappy."[52] Sunday. "I have this week been dining out every day. To-day, to which I looked forward as a religious season with hope and pleasure, my heart is little warm I fear, though my judgment is fixed. Yet let me earnestly pray to God to give me His grace, to guide me, to preserve me, to render me useful here, and in the end a partaker of His glory."[53]

[52] Diary.

[53] Journal, Jan. 22.

His life varied little during his stay at Bath. "Feb. 2nd. Dined at Anstey's—large miscellaneous party, and rout afterwards. Mr. Francillon went from talking of the discipline of the Calvinist church, to dance a cotillon. Sunday, 5th. Randolph's. Sacrament, which received—afterwards serious talk with Acklom. Heard at Pump-room of Austrian defeats. Poor Burke come down quite emaciated. 9th. Eliot called, and a very pleasant day. Evening, called on Burke, and sat an hour—no serious talk."

"I find little time here," he complained, "for study, not above two or three hours in a morning hitherto, at tract. Calls, of which I make about sixty, and receive as many—water-drinking—dinings out with people, who expect me to stay—many letters to write;—all this leaves me, though hurrying much, and I hope not idling, very little time."[54] "I should like to be with you," wrote Dr. Milner, whom he had pressed to join him, "but not to dine with a gang of fellows on the Queen's birth-day." But towards the end of his stay, though he still speaks of "daily dinings out, and between sixty or seventy people to visit," he "managed to be pretty diligent in the mornings on" his "tract, chiefly revising;" and by the time of his return to London it was ready for the printer.

[54] Journal, Jan. 29.

"Bath, Feb. 10, 1797.

"My dear Muncaster,

This is indeed a sad place for having any thing to do in, which you know has been my case: with difficulty have I cut out of the morning two or three hours for solid work, in revising my tract, and I have not yet got through the task; but I believe I shall have done it in a few days, and I think when I return to town again of committing it to the press.

"You will I am sure be glad to hear that certainly the waters never agreed so well with me as this time; so well, that I conceive I shall often apply to them, if we should henceforth be at liberty to attend in peace to our several ailments; for, this I doubt. Truly my gloomy views of the state of things amongst us are more and more verified. Indeed yours have been of the same hue. I have but one satisfaction, and that is in knowing that all human events are under the direction of a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, who, though by ways to us inscrutable, is carrying on the purposes of His own will. My dear friend, how strongly does the precariousness of all human prospects and possessions inculcate the lesson of pursuing something more stable than this world contains. Let not this lesson be preached to us in vain.

"I hear from London that the day for Lawrence's motion, concerning which you asked me, is not yet fixed; only a general notice that it should be

soon after the recess. Also Ellis's about the Slave Trade exactly the same; and my own, which I shall defer most likely till after his. Fox's motion is for the 24th. Pitt's Poor Bill unfixed. You had better however be up by the beginning or middle of the week after next. You would be sorry to be absent on Ellis's motion, and I should be sorry to have you so. Burke is come here but very poorly, and Windham is visiting him. His faculties are as fresh as ever; he abstains from talking politics. Kindest remembrances.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

On the 14th of February he "reached London by five o'clock, and dined at Pitt's; but Grenville being there could not get out much, though I had given up going to Greathed's for suggesting about Eliot succeeding Lord Cornwallis."[55] This appointment he earnestly desired, as he knew that Mr. Eliot's official influence in India would have been made subservient to the extension of Christianity; an object for which at this very moment he was devising fresh expedients. "There is considerable probability," he told Mr. Hey,[56] "of our being permitted to send to the East Indies a certain number of persons, I presume we shall want ten or twelve, for the purpose of instructing the natives in the English language, and in the principles of Christianity. But the plan will need much deliberation. I really dare not plunge into such a depth

[55] Diary. [56] Jan. 4, and 21.

as is required without previous sounding; lest instead of pearls and corals, I should come up with my head covered only with sea weed, and become a fair laughing-stock to the listless and unenterprising. When I return to town we will hold a Cabinet council on the business, Henry Thornton, Grant, and myself, are the junto." When Mr. Eliot's appointment seemed to be secure, both "Mr. Dundas and Lord Cornwallis preferring him to any other person,"[57] a dangerous attack of illness forced him to refuse the situation.

Parliament reassembled upon the 14th of February, "amidst a state of things" which appeared "most unpromising." The prospect soon became still more gloomy. "I have been trying," he says on the 26th, "for several days to see Pitt. This evening Eliot came in and told me of the Bank going to stop payment to-morrow. We talked much about it, and it disturbed my sleep at night."

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"My dear Muncaster,

Eliot has just been with me to inform me that the Bank is to stop payment by command of Government to-morrow morning. I have not been party to this counsel, but have of course suggested what has occurred to me to prevent riots, and secure a supply of provisions for the capital. I like to tell you bad as well as good tidings. O my dear friend, how this

[57] Letter from Charles Grant Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Feb. 4.

tumultuous state endears to one that heavenly peace, which, flowing from a source which worldly disturbances cannot reach, may remain entire though all around us be in confusion.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"11 o'clock, Sunday night."

"Monday 27th. Anxious about great event. Went to *General*[58]—found him, Rose, Long, Eliot, Lord Auckland. Letter from Lord Carrington stating that all going on well, and stocks rising. They seemed cheerful, and gay. When I got back I called upon Bankes and told him so. He was surprised, because Lord Auckland came in where Mrs. Bankes and Lady Auckland were, and had said this was the beginning of the throat-cutting measures. Samuel Thornton says that the Cabinet very averse to take on themselves the responsibility of the measure. They were walking about, &c. 'No,' said the Chancellor, 'this will never do.' At last Pitt said, 'My Lords, shall I draw up the minute?' General really afraid that unless the cash stopped, there would not be enough to pay the army, navy, and ordnance. General disposed to make large personal sacrifices: not sanguine in ideas that much can be saved in public expenditure, or thinking that any material abuses exist. Fearful lest we should so far let down the spirits of men, that they should be ready to patch up any kind of compromise with Jacobin principles."[59]

[58] Mr. Pitt. [59] Diary.

Two days afterwards he was chosen one of a Parliamentary Committee which took possession of the Bank, and examined into its solvency. "Saturday. Committee as usual. Examined Pitt—wanted to sit the next day, but I repelled."[60] After a morning thus occupied, he spent his evenings in the House, where he was frequently called up by the bitterness of party spirit in defence of Mr. Pitt, upon whom he was still urging privately the necessity of making peace. "Dined at Pitt's quietly—he, R. and I. R. more unmanageable than Pitt. I counsel for peace."[61] "Called at Pitt's—a most earnest conversation about peace, and degree in which I may fairly differ from ministry about it. Pitt exceedingly moved."[62]

To his other business was soon added the renewed agitation of the Abolition question. His partial success in the preceding session had taught the West Indians the value of Mr. Dundas's policy; and they now turned aside his efforts by seeming but unsubstantial concession.

"I send you," writes Mr. Wilberforce,[63] "the abominable motion that Ellis means to make on Monday next. Lucubrate, and send me a sheet full of hints." Mr. Ellis moved an address to the Crown praying for the issue of directions to the several island governors, with the professed intention of preparing for the Abolition. The direct effect of such a step was to leave the matter in the hands of the colonial

[60] March 4. [61] Diary, March 28. [62] Ib. March 31.
[63] Letter to Thomas Babington Esq. Feb.

assemblies, whose hatred to the work was proof against the most earnest representation of their friends at home,[64] "that they must at least *appear* to act, if they would be safe from the interference of the British parliament." Such a measure could not of course satisfy any who heartily opposed the trade. "Called at the Speaker's," says the Diary of the 1st of April, "where Mornington. Discussed about Ellis's motion. Ellis's motion till very late—much hurt—Pitt wanted me to close with it modified, but when I would not, stood stiffly by me." In this debate the Abolition party found in Mr. Bryan Edwards a new and powerful opponent, while they lost a useful friend in Mr. Windham. The dread of French politics still oppressed the House, and the delusive measure was carried by a majority of 30.[65]

The resolutions with which he had begun this busy season, were, "to redeem time more; to keep God more in view, and Christ, and all He has suffered for us; and the unseen world, where Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God interceding for His people. I would grow in love and tender solicitude for my fellow-creatures' happiness, in preparedness for any events which may befall me in this uncertain state. I may be called to sharp trials, but Christ is able to strengthen me for the event, be it what it may."[66] These resolutions he soon had to act upon in bearing a series of calumnious charges which were

[64] Vid. Wilberforce on the Slave Trade, p. 226.
[65] 93 to 63. [66] Journal, March 8. Fast day.

heaped upon him in a Cambridge newspaper. "I am abused for the grossest hypocrisy in Flower's paper, which states as a fact that I always had a prayer book in the Pump-room, and said my prayers there." "There seems," says Dr. Milner,[67] "to be something systematic meant against you. It really appears to amount to downright hatred and persecution, nor have I the least doubt that the person who writes in this manner would do you personal injury if he could with impunity. I have no question that he is some violent democratic dissenter, and perhaps if you could unkennel him, some private anecdotes between you and him would turn up. The true way however is not to notice such a writer. He can do you no harm in any way. No man who does not hate you and your cause beforehand, will be induced to do so by such an intemperate account; and as to your book, they cannot hurt it, though its contents will provoke them. God preserve you."

"My being moved by this falsehood," he says,[68] "is a proof that I am too much interested about worldly favour. Yet I endeavour I hope to fight against the bad tempers of revenge and pride which it is generating, by thinking of all our Saviour suffered in the way of calumny. St. Stephen also and St. Paul were falsely accused. Let me humbly watch myself, so far as this false charge may suggest matter of amendment; and also I ought to be very thankful that with the many faults of which I am conscious, it has pleased God that

[67] Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. March 30. [68] Journal, March 26.

I have never been charged justly, or where I could not vindicate myself. How good is God! The business of C. off so well; I left it more to Him than I have often done in such cases. Be this remembered for future practice. The real truth is that at Bath I carried sometimes a New Testament, a Horace, or a Shakespeare in my pocket, and got by heart or recapitulated in walking or staying by myself in the Pump-room. I had got a Testament which had not the common dress of one on purpose. I cannot recollect having had any movement of spiritual pride on this ground, but remember I thought it a profitable way. I got two or three of St. Paul's epistles by heart when otherwise quite idle, and had resolved to learn much Scripture in this way, remembering Venn's comfort from it. Thou, Lord, knowest my integrity, and it will finally appear; meanwhile let my usefulness not be prevented by this report, or that of my book thwarted. What a blessed institution is the Sunday!"

He had been engaged about "his book" ever since his return from Bath. Immediately upon coming to town, he "had seen Cadell and agreed to begin printing;" and throughout the session its revision occupied his spare time. He corrected the press when business flagged in the committee room;[69] and the index and errata were the work of midnight hours, when the debate was over. "I am sitting all day," he tells Mrs. Hannah More upon the 6th of March,

[69] On the Bank Restrictions. An immense mass of notes attests the diligence with which he attended this committee.

"in the committee on the late order in council, and I take up my pen to acquaint you that the book is about one third printed, and to say that it has given me pleasure to receive even the moderate account which you have sent of yourself. I am not of opinion that you should consider your health as a sacred deposit to be locked up like the gold now in the Bank, but yet that you should reserve it for the most pressing emergencies."

Upon the 12th of April his work was published—"My book out to-day."[70] Many were those who anxiously watched the issue. Dr. Milner had strongly dissuaded his attempt. "A person who stands so high for talent," wrote David Scott, "must risk much in point of fame at least, by publishing upon a subject on which there have been the greatest exertions of the greatest genius." His publisher was not devoid of apprehensions as to the safety of his own speculation. There was then little demand for religious publications, and "he evidently regarded me an amiable enthusiast."[71] "You mean to put your name to the work? Then I think we may venture upon 500 copies," was Mr. Cadell's conclusion. Within a few days it was out of print, and within half a year five editions (7500 copies) had been called for. His friends were delighted with the execution of the work, as well as with its reception. "I heartily thank you for your book," wrote Lord Muncaster. "As a friend I thank you for it; as a man I doubly thank you; but as a

[70] Diary. [71] Con. Mem.

member of the Christian world, I render you all gratitude and acknowledgment. I thought I knew you well, but I know you better now, my dearest excellent Wilber." "I see no reason," said his friend, James Gordon,[72] "why you should wish to have given it another year's consideration; the world would only have been so much the worse by one year." "I send you herewith," Mr. Henry Thornton writes to Mr. Macaulay, "the book on religion lately published by Mr. Wilberforce; it excites even more attention than you would have supposed, amongst all the graver and better disposed people. The bishops in general much approve of it, though some more warmly, some more coolly. Many of his gay and political friends admire and approve of it; though some do but dip into it. Several have recognised the likeness of themselves. The better part of the religious world, and more especially the Church of England, prize it most highly, and consider it as producing an era in the history of the church. The Dissenters, many of them, call it legal,[73] and point at particular parts. Gilbert Wakefield has already scribbled something against it. I myself am amongst those who contemplate it as a most important work."

This was the universal feeling amongst those who looked seriously around them on the face of things. "I am truly thankful to Providence," wrote

[72] Letter from J. Gordon Esq.

[73] In the year 1818, he was assailed in the "Scotsman" by an exactly opposite insinuation. "Mr. Wilberforce is a man of rigid Calvinistic principles," &c. In the margin of the paper he wrote, "False."

Bishop Porteus,[74] "that a work of this nature has made its appearance at this tremendous moment. I shall offer up my fervent prayers to God, that it may have a powerful and extensive influence on the hearts of men, and in the first place on my own, which is already humbled, and will I trust in time be sufficiently awakened by it." "I deem it," Mr. Newton told him,[75] "the most valuable and important publication of the present age, especially as it is yours:" and to Mr. Grant he wrote, "What a phenomenon has Mr. Wilberforce sent abroad! Such a book by such a man, and at such a time! A book which must and will be read by persons in the higher circles, who are quite inaccessible to us little folk, who will neither hear what we can say, nor read what we may write. I am filled with wonder and with hope. I accept it as a token for good; yea, as the brightest token I can discern in this dark and perilous day. Yes, I trust that the Lord, by raising up such an incontestable witness to the truth and power of the gospel, has a gracious purpose to honour him as an instrument of reviving and strengthening the sense of real religion where it already is, and of communicating it where it is not."

The aspect of the times, in which, says Mr. Hey,[76] "hell seems broke loose in the most pestiferous doctrines and abominable practices, which set the Almighty at defiance, and break the bonds of civil

[74] To W. Wilberforce Esq. May 10.
[75] April 21. [76] To W. Wilberforce Esq. April 29.

society," led even the less thoughtful to look to its effect with some anxiety. "I sincerely hope," wrote the Lord Chancellor, (Loughborough,)[77] "that your book will be read by many, with that just and proper temper which the awful circumstances in which we stand ought to produce." Its tone was well calculated to create these hopes. There was an air of entire reality pervading its addresses, which brought them closely home to the heart and conscience of the reader. It was not the fine-spun theory of some speculative declaimer, but the plain address of one who had lived amongst and watched those to whom he spoke. "Let me recommend you to open on the last section of the fourth chapter," was his advice to Mr. Pitt;[78] "you will see wherein the religion which I espouse differs practically from the common system. Also the sixth chapter has almost a right to a perusal, being the basis of all politics, and particularly addressed to such as you." "I desired my bookseller," he tells Mr. Newton,[79] "to leave at your house a copy of my publication; and though I scarcely suppose that your leisure will be sufficient to enable you to fight through the whole of it, you may perhaps look into it occasionally. If so, let me advise you to dip into the third or fourth chapters, and perhaps the concluding one. I cannot help saying it is a great relief to my mind to have published what I may call my manifesto; to have plainly told my worldly ac-

[77] Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. May 5.
[78] To the Right Hon. William Pitt, April 16. [79] April 19.

quaintance what I think of their system and conduct, and where it must end. I own I shall act in my parliamentary situation with more comfort and satisfaction than hitherto. You will perceive that I have laboured to make my book as acceptable to men of the world as it could be made without a dereliction of principle; and I hope I have reason to believe not without effect. I hope also that it may be useful to young persons who with general dispositions to seriousness are very ignorant about religion, and know not where to apply for instruction. It is the grace of God, however, only that can teach, and I shall at least feel a solid satisfaction from having openly declared myself as it were on the side of Christ, and having avowed on what my hopes for the well-being of the country bottom."

But whilst thus addressed in the first instance to his personal acquaintance, it reasoned on the common principles of human nature. It was devotional, not controversial. It spoke the language of no sect or party, but brought out clearly and forcibly the great outlines of the revealed gospel, contrasting them keenly but soberly with the ordinary practice of the day. It was therefore well fitted, like the Manual of à Kempis, to spread throughout the whole church, and call on every side into practical efficiency admitted, though long dormant, principles. Its composition would naturally increase its influence. As a literary work it might be judged to need greater condensation; but its style was the best suited to produce effect. "I

was purposely," he has said, "more diffuse than strict taste prescribed, because my object was to make an impression upon men in general." "Do not curtail too much," he once said to a friend, "portable soup must be diluted before it can be used." There is in truth throughout the volume a rich and natural eloquence, which wins its way easily with every reader. Its illustrations are happy; its insight into motives clear; and above all, its tone is every where affectionate and earnest. It was seen to be "the produce of his heart as well as of his understanding."

He addressed his fellow-countrymen moreover from an eminence on which he could be heard; as a layman safe from the imputation of professional bias; and as one who lived in the public eye, and was seen to practise what he taught. He raised indeed a strict, but his own example proved that it was a practicable, standard. His life had long been a puzzle to observers. Some had even thought him mad, because they could not comprehend the strange exhibition of his altered habits; but his work supplied the rationale of his conduct, whilst his conduct enforced the precepts of his work. Any one might now examine the staff of the Wizard and learn the secrets of his charmed book: "How careful ought I to be," was his own reflection,[80] "that I may not disgust men by an inconsistency between the picture of a Christian which I draw, and which I exhibit! How else can I expect the blessing of God on my book? May His grace quicken me."

[80] Journal, April 9.

"That he acted up," is the judgment of a shrewd observer, "to his opinions as nearly as is consistent with the inevitable weakness of our nature, is a praise so high that it seems like exaggeration; yet in my conscience I believe it, and I knew him well for at least forty years."[81]

The effect of this work can scarcely be overrated. Its circulation was at that time altogether without precedent. In 1826 fifteen editions (and some very large impressions) had issued from the press in England. "In India," says Henry Martyn in 1807, "Wilberforce is eagerly read." In America the work was immediately reprinted, and within the same period twenty-five editions had been sold. It has been translated into the French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German languages. Its influence was proportionate to its diffusion. It may be affirmed beyond all question, that it gave the first general impulse to that warmer and more earnest spring of piety which, amongst all its many evils, has happily distinguished the last half century.

As soon as his book was published he set off for Bath, where he was followed by the congratulations of many of his friends. "My book," he says,[82] "is universally well received, especially by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops of London, Durham, Rochester, and Llandaff, the Duchess of Gloucester, Sir J. Scott. Much pleased by a letter from Lord St.

[81] Entry on a blank page of the "Practical View," by J. B. S. Morritt Esq.

[82] Diary, May 28.

Helen's, most highly commending it as adapted to the good of worldly men." From Mr. Newton he heard again:

TO W. WILBERFORCE ESQ.

"My very dear Sir,

I can converse with you as often as I please by your late publication, which I have now read through with increasing satisfaction a third time. I mean not to praise you, but I must and will praise the Lord for your book, which I cannot doubt will be accompanied by a Divine blessing and productive of happy effects. I hope it will be useful to me, and of course to those who attend on my ministry. I have been near fifty years in the Lord's school: during this space He has graciously taught me many things of which I was once no less ignorant than the beasts of the field. He has made me a debtor to many ministers, and to many books, but still I had something to learn from your book. You have not only confirmed but enlarged my views of several important points. One thing strikes me much, and excites my praise to the Lord on your behalf, that a gentleman in your line of life, harassed with a multiplicity of business and surrounded on all sides with snares, could venture to publish such a book, without fearing a retort either from the many friends or the many enemies amongst whom you have moved so many years. The power of the Lord in your favour seems to be little less remarkable than in the three young men who lived

unhurt and unsinged in the midst of the fire, or of Daniel, who sat in peace in the den when surrounded by lions. It plainly shows that His grace is all-sufficient to keep us in any situation which His providence appoints us.

"I believe I must in future alter the tone of my quarterly[83] payments, if I continue to make them. Though I have long been well satisfied that the Lord had in mercy set you apart for Himself, yet I thought an occasional hint of the dangers to which you were exposed might not be unseasonable. But now I shall be glad to look to you (at least to your book) for cautions against the evils that beset my own path, and for considerations to strengthen my motives for running the uncertain remainder of my race with alacrity. May the wisdom and power of the Most High guide, strengthen, and protect you.

I am, with the most sincere regard,

My dear Sir,

Your much obliged and affectionate

JOHN NEWTON.

"Reading, June 7, 1797."

There were other letters which gave him even greater and more enduring satisfaction. Not a year passed throughout his after-life, in which he did not receive fresh testimonies to the blessed effects which it pleased God to produce through his publication. In

[83] Mr. Newton was accustomed to write to him four times at least every year.

acknowledging this goodness of his God, the outpourings of his heart are warm and frequent; though the particular occasions are too sacred to be publicly divulged:

"Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus."

Men of the first rank and highest intellect, clergy and laity, traced to it their serious impressions of religion; and tendered their several acknowledgments in various ways; from the anonymous correspondent "who had purchased a small freehold in Yorkshire, that by his vote he might offer him a slight tribute of respect," down to the grateful message of the expiring Burke. That great man was said by Mr. Windham in the House of Commons, when he had arranged his worldly matters, to have amused his dying hours with the writings of Addison. He might have added what serious minds would have gladly heard: "have you been told," Mr. Henry Thornton asks Mrs. Hannah More, "that Burke spent much of the two last days of his life in reading Wilberforce's book, and said that he derived much comfort from it, and that if he lived he should thank Wilberforce for having sent such a book into the world? so says Mrs. Crewe, who was with Burke at the time." Before his death Mr. Burke summoned Dr. Laurence to his side, and committed specially to him the expression of these thanks.

Amidst these circumstances his sobriety of mind remained unshaken. "I was much struck," says a friend who was with him whilst at Bath, "with his entire sim-

plicity of manners. The place was very full; the sensation which his work produced drew upon him much observation, but he seemed neither flattered nor embarrassed by the interest he excited." The secret of this easy self-possession may be read in the entries of his private Journal. "Bath, April 14th, three o'clock, Good Friday. I thank God that I *now* do feel in some degree as I ought this day. I trust that I feel true humiliation of soul from a sense of my own extreme unworthiness; a humble hope in the favour of God in Christ; some emotion from the contemplation of Him who at this very moment was hanging on the cross; some shame at the multiplied mercies I enjoy; some desire to devote myself to Him who has so dearly bought me; some degree of that universal love and good-will, which the sight of Christ crucified is calculated to inspire. Oh if the contemplation *here* can produce these effects on my hard heart, what will the vision of Christ in glory produce hereafter! I feel something of pity too for a thoughtless world; and oh what gratitude is justly due from me (the vilest of sinners, when compared with the mercies I have received) who have been brought from darkness into light, and I trust from the pursuit of earthly things to the prime love of things above! Oh purify my heart still more by Thy grace. Quicken my dead soul, and purify me by Thy Spirit, that I may be changed from glory to glory, and be made even here in some degree to resemble my heavenly Father.

"I would now in prayer (which I set down for my own memory) lament the chief sins of all my life, and carefully examine myself with penitence.—Good Friday employment—Look back on the mercies of God through life. Oh how numerous, and how freely bestowed! Try Quintilian's plan (Phantasia) as to Christ's crucifixion. Pray for pardon, acceptance, holiness, peace; for courage, humility, and all that I chiefly want; for love and heavenly-mindedness. Pray to be guided aright respecting my domestic choice, &c. Pray for my country both in temporal and spiritual things. Pray for political wisdom; for the success of my book just come out; for the poor slaves; for the Abolition; for Sierra Leone; for the success of missions. Think over my enemies with forgiveness and love, over my friends and acquaintances, and pray for both. In the evening make launchers,[84] and think how I may do good to my acquaintances and friends, and pray for wisdom here." "I humbly bless God that I have enjoyed this morning a very large degree of internal comfort, and that my heart has been tender; but I fear animal transport and emotion. But what a solid satisfaction is it to reflect that our ascended Lord views us with a pitying and sympathetic eye; that He knows what it is to have a feeling of our infirmities, that He promises, and He is truth as well as love, that they who wait on Him shall renew their strength! What a blessed Sunday have I been permitted to spend!"[85]

[84] Vid. p. 104. [85] Journal. Easter Sunday, April 16.

On the day following, Monday, April 17th, "Heard," he says,[86] "of Portsmouth mutiny—consultation with Burke." "The only letter which reached Bath that day by the cross post from Portsmouth was one from Captain Bedford of the Royal Sovereign to Patty More. She brought it me, and I took it at once to Burke. He could not then see me, but at his desire I called again at two o'clock. The whole scene is now before me. Burke was lying on a sofa much emaciated; and Windham, Laurence, and some other friends were round him. The attention shown to Burke by all that party was just like the treatment of Ahithophel of old. 'It was as if one went to inquire of the oracle of the Lord.' I reported to them the account I had received, and Burke being satisfied of its authority, we held a consultation on the proper course for Government to follow. Windham set off for London the same night with the result of our deliberations. Burke's advice was very much the same as Sir Charles Middleton's had been on a similar occasion, which Pitt often mentioned as an instance of Sir Charles's promptitude and resolution. Pitt and Lord Chatham, then first Lord of the Admiralty, had sent for Middleton, and met him with the information, 'Bad news, Sir Charles, from the fleet, a ship has mutinied; what are we to do?' Sir Charles, who had always been an enemy to pressing, and who actually resigned his office of Comptroller of the Navy because he could not carry some reforms, which would

[86] Diary.

have prevented the breaking out of the great mutiny, immediately replied, 'You know how ill I think these poor fellows have been used, but now that it has come to a mutiny, there is but one thing to be done, you must show them that you have the superiority; you must order a ninety-gun ship on each side of her, and sink her on the spot if she does not at once submit.' They were staggered, and said doubtfully, 'That is a strong measure, what if they should refuse to obey?' 'Then indeed all would be over: but they will not refuse to obey if you give the order resolutely, and it is the only thing which can be done.' He left them still undetermined, and in a few minutes came back with the despatch drawn up; and seeing still some hesitation, said, 'Pray sign it instantly, there is much to be done in the office, and we shall scarcely be ready in time to save the post.' 'Sir Charles,' said Pitt, 'is the best man of business I know, but he will do any thing for a *methodist*.' 'He has the good sense,' was my reply, 'to know that he cannot be secure of the due execution of his measures, unless he can depend upon his instruments.'"[86]

The mutiny which now broke out, and for months kept the nation in alarm, had already gained too much head to be so easily suppressed. The time of its continuance was ever esteemed by Mr. Wilberforce the most critical within his recollection.

[86] Con. Mem.

TO W. HEY ESQ.

"Bath, April 19, 1797.

"My dear Sir,

* * * I came here on Thursday night, and unless I should be forced up again by the call of business, I mean to remain here a fortnight longer. A mutiny in our grand fleet! Do you remember the first piece in the first volume of Cowper? How does this tend to confound the insolence, and strike terror to the hearts of our rulers, who vainly imagined that they might in this line defy almost the power of Providence itself! God will humble the lofty: and I can truly declare that for several years Mr. Pitt's swaggering speeches in opening the budget, and the swelling acclamations with which they were received, have *chilled* my heart at the very moment, and made me augur some future abasement. * * *

I am ever, my dear Sir,
yours, very sincerely,
W. WILBERFORCE."

Before the fortnight expired his return was earnestly desired by Mr. Pitt. "I do not," he wrote,[87] "easily bring myself to propose to you to exchange any one of the days you would pass at Bath, for such as you will find in the House of Commons. But it seems very important not to delay for a moment more than is necessary the decision on the Austrian loan. The

[87] April 28.

sending the result to Vienna may be of infinite importance. I have therefore been obliged to fix it for Monday, and trust to seeing you in the course of that day."

The summons was peculiarly unwelcome. "I doubt," he had written to a friend six months before, "if I shall ever change my situation; the state of public affairs concurs with other causes in making me believe 'I must finish my journey alone.' I much differ from you in thinking that a man such as I am has no reason to apprehend some violent death or other. I do assure you that in my own case I think it highly probable. Then consider how extremely I am occupied. What should I have done had I been a family-man for the last three weeks, worried from morning to night? But I must not think of such matters now, it makes me feel my solitary state too sensibly. Yet this state has some advantages; it makes me *feel* I am not at home, and impresses on me the duty of looking for and hastening to a better country." But his sentiments had now undergone a considerable change. At Bath he had formed the acquaintance of one whom he judged well fitted to be his companion through life, and towards whom he contracted a strong attachment. "Jacta est alea," he says upon receiving her favourable answer,[87] "I believe indeed she is admirably suited to me, and there are many circumstances which seem to advise the step. I trust God will bless me; I go to pray to

[87] Journal. Tuesday, April 23.

Him. I believe her to be a real Christian, affectionate, sensible, rational in habits, moderate in desires and pursuits; capable of bearing prosperity without intoxication, and adversity without repining. If I have been precipitate, forgive me, O God! But if as I trust we shall both love and fear and serve Thee, Thou wilt bless us according to Thy sure word of promise."

A sudden call from Bath was, under these circumstances, what he would have gladly escaped. On that very day also he was expecting three of his most valued friends who were coming to him from a distance; but it was a call of duty, and he at once "resolved to obey it." By Monday evening he was in town. The next morning's post brought news which dispelled Mr. Pitt's hopes as to the loan to Austria. It had been remarked by those who knew him best, as an instance of his confidence in God, that at such a time of general apprehension he should have resolved to marry. The prospect was now gloomy at home and hopeless on the continent; and with the strongest trust in that merciful Father who had hitherto protected him, he looked forward to approaching trouble as an altered man. He found already that he had given hostages to fortune. "Muncaster told me of the Emperor's separate peace. Much affected by it for *her* sake. Wrote to her and told her that I would not hold her to engagement against her will."[88] "The intelligence we have received," he wrote,[89] "of the Emperor's having made a separate peace affects me with

[88] Diary, May 3.

[89] May 3.

emotions hitherto unknown; it is doubtful what the effects of the event may be on our internal situation. I seem to have drawn you into a participation of my fortunes at a most unseasonable time, and I am distressed by the idea of involving you in trouble and misfortune by the part it may be my duty to take in so perilous a conjuncture."

Yet this was but a passing cloud which shaded his habitual cheerfulness. "You have heard me say," he writes again a few days later,[90] "that I am no predestinarian, and it is certainly true; yet when I review the incidents of my past life, and observe how God 'has led me by a way which I knew not,' has supported me when weak, has raised me when fallen, has brought me out of darkness into light, has kept me from forming a connexion where it would have proved too surely a clog and a restraint to me, and has at length disposed our hearts mutually to each other; when I see these and ten thousand other such things, (many of them you will like to hear,) I can only lift up my hands and eyes in silent adoration, and recognise the providence of God disposing all things according to the counsel of His own will; and graciously recompensing the very feeblest endeavours to please and serve Him." "On looking back to my past life I see many instances, some greater, some smaller, of God's providential care and kindness. These infuse into me a humble hope that, though public affairs wear a most

[90] May 5.

gloomy aspect, yet I shall be rescued from future evils, and shall be a specimen of His undeserved grace and kindness to those that humbly look up to Him. It would to some seem superstitious to note how good God has been to me in a variety of little instances (preserving me from evil, from discredit, &c.) as well as in more important cases."[90]

Those troubled times needed such a ground of confidence. Whilst the naval mutiny was yet unappeased, discontents broke out amongst the military in the neighbourhood of London. At this moment it was buzzed about that Mr. Wilberforce had written to the soldiers to express his sympathy, and promise to bring their complaints before the House of Commons. So wide-spread was the rumour, that on the 13th of May he says, "Pitt sent to me about the soldiers," and "Windham" (Secretary at War) "called" on the same errand "in the course of the day." "I have no intention," was his answer, "of making any motion on the subject, but to do so at this time, and in such a manner, I should deem little short of positive insanity." Still it was asserted that an agent from himself had brought the message to the barracks, read aloud his letter, and actually shown to them his signature. Further inquiry brought out a solution of the imputation, highly characteristic of its object. One Williams, a needy, and as he thought penitent man, had been recommended by Mr. Scott to the charity of Mr. Wilberforce. He was a clergyman of the church

[90] Journal.

of England, and had reduced himself to abject want by unprincipled excess: on his apparent penitence he found in Mr. Wilberforce a generous supporter, who had continued privately to relieve his necessity, even after he had spit in his benefactor's face and had been kept by a Bow Street warrant from further acts of violence. Finding him at last irreclaimable, Mr. Wilberforce had written to refuse him any further aid; and with this letter "wicked Williams" ... such was his usual appellation ... had visited the barracks, pretended to read the feigned message, and then exhibited the signature.

Upon the 15th of May, his motion on the Slave Trade was again before the House; but the West Indians maintained the ground which they had gained at the commencement of the session. They opposed the motion with a bolder front than usual. Mr. Wilberforce was ridiculed by Bryan Edwards for declaring that by the gloomy aspect of affairs he was reminded of the slumbering wrath of Heaven, which the Slave Trade must provoke; he was taunted with the humanity of the Liverpool merchants, and the distresses of the chimney-sweepers. A majority of 82 to 74 against the measure was only what had been anticipated from the existing House of Commons. "I wrote last night," he says the next day playfully in a letter to Bath, "whilst a very slow and heavy speaker was railing at me, to my lawyer about our settlements; so I did not want Christian love to keep me from falling out of temper, and I have been too

long used to it to feel much disappointment on losing my motion."

Every day was now fully occupied. "23rd. Breakfast at Sir Charles Middleton's. Proclamation committee. Carrington's to read settlements. Dined before House: friends—Muncaster, Carrington, &c. House—Fox on repeal of the two Bills till late. 25th. Morning to city to breakfast on business—very unfit to go—nearly fainted afterwards from the heat. Home and dined—Lord Hawke sitting by me and discussing. Pitt's about turnpike tax. House—Sir William Pulteney's motion about the Bank—put off, so House up early. Lock Hospital—about its funds—nearly ruined. Weather all this time most oppressively hot—could not sleep at night. 26th. Lord St. Helen's with me on politics. Parliamentary Reform day. Dined before House—Muncaster, Smyth, and Lascelles. Extremely exhausted by the heat of the House. Nearly embarking in a long speech, but could not turn my mind to political business. Fox, &c. charged all our evils on want of Parliamentary Reform; and thought it would cure them. Very sorry for not having spoken—neglect of duty. Grey moderate—declared as well as Fox a secession—something solemn. I find that business will not prevent my leaving town for Bath. Pitt awaked by Woolwich artillery riot, and went out to Cabinet." "Pitt met us next morning declaring, 'Lord Harrington (a nobleman of the 'vieille cour,' then commanding the forces in London) is, after all, the greatest man in England.

When I saw him in the hurry and alarm last night, he was just as slow, and made as many bows, as if he had been loitering at the levee.'"[91]

"May 27th. Off after dinner, calling at Pitt's and strongly urging him to make a liberal offer at first to France; he convinced at length, that requisite to make immediate effort. I travelled on to Salt Hill. 28th, Sunday. Salt Hill. For some time past extremely hurried in London—but very poorly in health—never recovered since the influenza. Not able to sleep. Heat excessive, and I suffered from it more than I ever remember. Daily reports of the soldiery rising, and certainly some progress made. Pitt and the others now convinced that things *in extremis*, yet no apparent sense of God. I now feel exceedingly hunted and shattered."[92] On the following day he reached Bath, and upon the 30th, was married to Barbara Ann, eldest daughter of Isaac Spooner Esq. of Elmdon Hall in the county of Warwick. "You will perhaps judge my way of thinking old-fashioned and queer," was the congratulation of his late colleague Henry Duncombe,[93] "but I am greatly pleased that you have not chosen your partner from among the titled fair ones of the land. Do not however tell Lady C. so."

His first visit with his bride was to Mrs. Hannah More's. "Received at Cowslip Green with great kindness—delightful day and sweet ride. Sunday morning,

[91] Con. Mem.

[92] Diary.

[93] To W. Wilberforce Esq., May 10.

as early as able, tour of the schools—Shipham, Axbridge, and Cheddar. Delighted with all we saw, Cheddar in particular—a delightful scene, when old people collected together at afternoon reading. Home at night, after a pleasant drive."[94] Already, at the expiration of the first week from his marriage, he condemns himself "for not having been duly diligent,"[95] and on the next day he set out again for London. His head-quarters were now in Palace Yard, and for an occasional retreat he rented of his friend Mr. Eliot his house on Clapham Common.

"Let me now," he says[96] on his return to London, "commence a new era, guarding cautiously against all infirmities to which I am personally, or from circumstances, liable; and endeavouring to cultivate all opportunities. I go to prayer; may the grace of God give me repentance. Fix, O Lord, my natural volatility; let not Satan destroy or impair these impressions. I fall down before the cross of Christ, and would there implore pardon and find grace to help in this time of need. Let me use diligently and prudently to Thy glory all the powers and faculties Thou hast given me. Let me exhibit a bright specimen of the Christian character, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. Let me go forth remembering the vows of God which are upon me; remembering that all eyes will be surveying me from my book, my marriage, &c.; that my political station is most important, my means of doing good

[94] Diary, June 3. [95] Journal. [96] Ib.

numerous and great; my cup full of blessings, spiritual above all. The times how critical! Death perhaps at hand. May God be with me for Christ's sake."

Society had now new claims upon him. "Dined," he says, "at N.'s. with all the H.'s—grand dinner, very dull, as grand relations' dinners always are." "To the drawing-room with my wife." He was soon full of work of all sorts. "Was to meet Pitcairne and Sargent about St. Bartholomew's; but Pitcairne too late. Wanted St. Margaret's and St. John's parishes to associate. Vestry meeting. People would not come in to it. . To Pitt's about provisional Cavalry Act. Then House on Ship Owners' Bill."[97] "Next morning,[98] by ourselves at Broomfield—happy day. Read Scripture." "Pitt told me yesterday about negociation. My *Skipper* friends saw him, and he with them. Business put off."[99]

He had carried a Bill through the Commons to enable Romanists to serve in the Militia.[100] In his own county they were strictly loyal men, who ought not, he thought, to be excluded from joining in the national defence. "I thank you," writes Sir John Lawson, "for obtaining the erasure of the words, 'I am a Protestant,' from the oath required of every man balloted into the supplemental Militia. I then hoped that every obstacle to my standing forward in the cause of my country

[97] Diary, July 7. [98] July 8. [99] Diary, July 11.

[100] He had proposed the Bill May 22. It had been read the third time July 4.

was done away, and in that conviction I took the very first occasion to offer my personal services." This Bill Mr. Pitt sanctioned, but it was supported feebly by his colleagues in the Upper House, where it was contested hotly because, at the motion of another member, Protestant Dissenters had been included in its provisions. "House of Lords about Roman Catholic Bill. Bishop of Rochester's violent speech. Bishop of Bristol. Bill thrown out. I too much incensed. Grenville and Pitt very like breaking friendship."[101]

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"June 19, 1797.

"My dear Muncaster,

One word to say vivo et valeo. I mean, henceforth, *I* to be the English dual, and vivite et valete. Thanks for all your kindness. We begin to settle into the calm complacencies of mutual affection and confidence.

"I am sorry to say the prospect of peace is a little clouded by the terms of the Directory's answer to our rejoinder demanding a passport. This has produced from us (and really from necessity) not the negociator's journey, but a letter of remark and asking explanations. I do not like Lord Malmesbury's being the man. What cause have we to be grateful to Providence, which after showing us that our vaunted strength could be made our most formidable weakness, and even worse than this, has rescued us from the impending evil.[102]

[101] Diary, July 12.

[102] The mutiny of the fleet.

"Kindest remembrances. I would we could leave this town.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The negociations which were soon after opened, furnished him with new employment. "A powerful West Indian party in France," he heard from Mr. Stephen,[103] "are labouring in concert with our government, to reverse the so-called 'pernicious colonial system,' the evils of which have already passed away, whilst its future blessings are incalculable. When I say 'in concert with our government,' I allude to the shameful article in Lord Malmesbury's propositions, and his oral explication of it to De la Croix; an attempt which will no doubt be renewed in the present negociations. That 'administration did it' stops the mouth of one party, and that 'Mr. Fox omitted to reprobate it,' has the same effect on the other; so much are the interests of party in this country an over-match for those of mercy and justice. I know you too well to suspect that your strong private as well as public attachment to one part of the administration, can outweigh your zeal in that glorious cause in which you have so long laboured; and therefore I am confident, that your private influence will be exerted against the revival of this wicked and invidious proposition. Whether your opposition to it will succeed I doubt, because I suspect it is not

[103] Letter from James Stephen Esq.

with your side of the Cabinet it originated; and because Mr. Pitt unhappily for himself his country and mankind, is not zealous enough in the cause of the negroes, to contend for them as decisively as he ought, in the Cabinet any more than in parliament."

He deemed the subject of such importance, that though "parliamentary business being nearly over" he was just about to leave London,[104] he "resolved to stay, in order to be useful about the treaty for Abolition, and prevent mischief in stipulations respecting West India slaves. Peace I believe there will be."—The hope of peace was but short-lived. On the 18th, a "messenger arrived with sad account of the negociation, and Pitt" (he says soon after) "now but diffident about its success." A longer stay seemed therefore to be useless, and he prepared to leave the neighbourhood of London. During the few days he remained at Broomfield he says, "Monday,[105] Last night a dreadful thunder-storm. Poor Lord St. Helen's house burnt down. To the Bishop of London's, Fulham—to dinner. Pleasing, good-natured day, and charming walk by the river's side. Home to Broomfield. Tuesday. St. Helen's came, poor fellow, and slept. Wednesday. Lounged with St. Helen's; after breakfast, to town; and Mornington being pressing, I went from House of Commons to dine at the London Tavern. East India House—sat next Rennie, geographer. Thursday. To town, and back to dine at Henry Thornton's, where Simeon and Grant to talk over Mis-

[104] Diary, July 16. [105] July 17.

sion scheme. Parliamentary session ended to-day. Speaker's Address to the King, good. Carrington, Pitt, and Speaker came down to us at Broomfield. Saturday. Simeon with us—his heart glowing with love of Christ." "How full he is of love, and of desire to promote the spiritual benefit of others. Oh that I might copy him, as he Christ. My path is indeed difficult, and full of enemies. But God in Christ can and will strengthen and uphold us if we trust in Him."[106]

On the 26th he set off towards the north, halting for a day at Buckden. "I am to be," he tells Mr. Hey, "at York for the assizes. My objections to it are much done away by my having published my book, which I consider a sort of explanatory manifesto." But at Newark he was met by information of the sudden death of Dr. Clarke. This changed his course to Hull, where upon the Saturday he joined his mother and his sister. "You would hear from Henry Thornton," he writes to Hannah More, August 2nd, "the melancholy account of Dr. Clarke's death. He was by no means of such a habit of body as to render us apprehensive of any seizure, and I rather feared a premature and a protracted old age. But in the midst of life we are in death. I look back to the time I spent with him at Bath with no little pleasure. Being in the same house, I learned more than I could otherwise have done of his habitual frame. He was a Christian of the true breed; quiet, silent, unobtrusive.

[106] Journal, July 22.

I know your impatient solicitude must have made you hurry over all this, in order to learn the sooner some tidings about my dear sister. I bless God she is pretty well, and more composed than I could have expected. She desires particularly to be remembered to you and Patty, and indeed to all the sisterhood. At any other time I should have had much to say in return to your last letter. If it were in my power, I would transport myself to you often on a Saturday evening, and accompany you on Sunday in your peregrinations. You are I fear wearing yourself out, and Patty also, but you cannot be spent in a better cause, and I do not know how to wish you to slacken your exertions. Rather I must cry out, 'Work while it is day, for the night cometh.' I wish you would let me quarter a few apprentices on you."

He now spent three weeks at Hull, cheering his aged mother and sorrowing sister. Here he watched from a distance the progress of events. "I am anxious about this negociation," he writes to Mr. Pitt;[107] "on the whole I augur well from its going on:" "send me a line or two," he asks the Speaker, "in pity to my unenlightened situation; you know how difficult, I may say next to impossible, it is to extort a line from Pitt."

Meanwhile he was busily engaged in doing what present good he could. The vicarage of the Holy Trinity church, now vacant by the death of Dr. Clarke, was in the gift of the corporation of the town; and

[107] To Rt. Hon. William Pitt, Aug 10.

Joseph Milner was a candidate for the appointment. "Went about," he says, July 31st, "to canvass for Milner—no promises, but hopeful. I have reason to believe that my being here is highly useful to Milner —they came from Carlisle on Wednesday."—"Milner appointed vicar," August 22nd, "by the corporation. My being here probably got him elected."

To Archdeacon Corbett he wrote at this time;

"Hull, Aug. 26, 1797.

"My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your kind letter. Your intelligence however respecting the Slave Trade has really moved me so much that I can scarcely turn to any other subject with proper composure. Surely Providence will not suffer such wickedness and cruelty to go on unavenged. One is strongly tempted to wish not merely that the sufferings of the Africans may cease, but that some signal mark of the Divine displeasure may desolate those abhorred islands. However, we are to bear in mind that 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,' and strive to retain that spirit of love which should bleed for the offender while it prevents or punishes the offence.

"You would hear from Muncaster of my situation; and from the kindness with which you are disposed to sympathize in whatever concerns me, you will I am sure be happy to learn that my mother and sister are bearing the severe stroke Providence has inflicted on them with composure.

"Your intelligence concerning Clarkson amuses me. My time is here so much occupied that I can scarcely get a vacant half hour for the most pressing business. But for this impediment I would gladly discuss with you for at least a sheet or two; but I must lay down my pen—not however without thanking you for your friendly congratulations on my marriage. I hope sometime to have the pleasure of introducing Mrs. Wilberforce to your family circle.

I remain, my dear Sir, with very
sincere regard, yours always,
W. WILBERFORCE.

"To Rev. J. J. Plymley (now Archdeacon Corbett)."

Just before he quitted Hull he wrote to Mr. Stephen;

"My dear Sir,

I wish we could make our orbits coincide for awhile, either at Mr. Babington's where I go for four or five days, or at Bath; it would give me real pleasure to have the opportunity of a little more quiet intercourse than we can expect to obtain in London. My plan of life is every where the same. The morning I spend in some sort of reading and writing, taking Mrs. Wilberforce along with me as much as I can in my studies and employments. We carry our business out of doors, and muse or read whilst taking the air and exercise. Dinner and supper are the seasons when I enjoy the company of my friends: and though

I do not push about the bottle, I can willingly prolong the dinner conversation, till it sometimes almost meets the beginning of our supper conversazione. When with me, you would be as free as to the disposal of your time as myself. So now I have told you my system, I will only repeat that I should give you a cordial welcome, if either at the Temple or at Bath the servant should announce 'Mr. Stephen.'

"Since I begun, your last letter has reached me, and I must not leave my reply to the chance of our meeting. I will be quite honest with you. I wish you had not told me of your being the author of the 'Morning Chronicle Strictures,' because my knowledge of this fact may expose me to the risk of some simulation or dissimulation, both which, in spite of Lord Bacon's distinction, are a little at variance with plain truth and real simplicity. But with your feelings and opinions I think you have acted quite right in not leaving it to the effect of a private representation to government, but enforcing this by any other means in your judgment likely to promote the desired end. I ought to add, I am not clear as to the real tendency of these means. Had you not better put your argument, to prove the impracticability of our succeeding in so wicked an attempt as that of bringing back the emancipated negroes into slavery, into a pamphlet, rather than let it be scattered through the columns of a newspaper. If your object be to rouse the attention of opposition—well; the Morning Chronicle would be the best. But if you wish ad-

ministration, I had almost said to read, much more to consider your statements, I should certainly greatly prefer the pamphlet plan. I fear they are all by far too much governed by prejudice and passion (alas, how generally do these operate on mankind in political matters) to listen to any thing which comes in so questionable, or rather so hostile, a shape, as a letter to Mr. Editor of the Morning Chronicle. I doubt whether your assuming this form might not even dispose many of the hot-headed friends of ministry to defend the whole plan. I remember in one of Farquhar's pert, low comedies, a pleasant incident of a father who has been represented as enraged at an extravagant son, and as venting his indignation against him in the grossest terms. An old uncle comes in who had always hated the son, and with whom the father had been used to quarrel on this subject.

"'*Uncle.* Well, brother, you know him at length; you see he has ruined himself, disgraced you,' &c.

"'*Father.* Well, brother, he is a good lad, I like that he should ruin himself, disgrace me,' &c.

"This is human nature. I really fear that by stirring up opposition you will do nothing, whereas if you can interest some of the less prejudiced supporters of government you do much. I am sure you will think I have done well in sending you these surmises. In extreme haste,

Yours always,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Though the circumstances of his family saved him from the necessity of paying visits, yet he had little leisure whilst he remained at Hull. "Late morning hours and early dining, many calls, a vast many letters, and attention to my mother, prevent my getting any thing done. Reading the Bible with my wife." "I wish I could have a recluse, devotional, thinking birthday, but that is impossible. On its return I have the utmost cause for self-humiliation, for gratitude, for grateful confidence, for earnest breathings after usefulness. I have no time to write, but let me use the few minutes I have in praying to God in Christ, the Author of my mercies, beseeching him to hear me, to fill me with spiritual blessings, and enable me to live to His glory. My marriage and the publication of my book are the great events of the past year. In both I see much to humble me, and to fill my mouth with praises. Let me resign myself to God, who has hitherto led me by ways that I knew not, and implore Him yet to bless me."[108]

A rope-yard behind his mother's house was almost the only place where he could here take his quiet musing walks; and the pleasure he had found in it he would mention long afterwards with gratitude. "It is hardly in human nature, I fear," wrote Dr. Milner the day after his departure,[109] "to continue long as happy as you are at present." "My cup was before teeming with mercies," he himself tells Mr. Macaulay,[110] "and it has at length pleased God

[108] Journal, Aug. 21. [109] Aug. 30. [110] Sept. 20.

to add the only ingredient almost which was wanting to its fulness. In this instance, as in many others, His goodness has exceeded my utmost expectations, and I ought with renewed alacrity and increased gratitude to devote myself to the service of my munificent Benefactor. I am half ready to blame myself for thus descanting on the topic I have chosen, but it is the strongest proof I can give you of my friendship, that I have opened myself to you on a subject, on which, in speaking to a mere acquaintance, I should have been the least likely to dwell. If I were sure of my letters reaching you in safety, I might open myself without reserve on some other topics; but as I know not but that this sheet may light the pipe, or singe the fowl, (if poulards are now singed,) of some Dutch or French captain, I am loth to venture too much in one bottom, or to say any thing which it would be disagreeable or mischievous to have miscarry. Therefore I will now bid you farewell, and write again to you before any long time elapses. Even this hasty scrawl will I doubt not be acceptable now you are so far removed from us. I imagine you see the public prints, and they keep you informed of all public events.

"We lately spent a week with our excellent friends the Babingtons, who, to the blessing of their neighbourhood, are now returned to the Temple. I own I am obliged to bite my cheek and set my teeth hard, when I quit such an enviable retirement to plunge into the bustle and wickedness of political life. But slave or free, every one is to remain and do his Lord's work in

that state in which he was called; and so I fall to work again, though, I own, mine is one of the last trades which I should have selected. But life will soon be over, and we are assured that no situation presents temptations which the grace of God cannot and will not enable us to resist, if we diligently seek it. Once more, my dear sir, farewell, and in the assurance of every friendly wish,

Believe me always sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He was now upon his road to Bath, spending a few days in passing at Wilford,[111] and at Rothley Temple. "Called at W.'s—and found fifteen or sixteen persons in a small hot room at cards on a fine summer's evening in a beautiful country! Breakfasted at Bathurst's—they very kind—declined staying and off for Bath, where got afternoon. Quiet evening. Friday and Saturday quiet pleasant days—by ourselves—not unbagged yet—reading, &c. rational. Sunday. Randolph's, morning—evening, Jay's—comfortable, happy Sunday. Monday. Reading, writing, &c. by ourselves."[112]

But this quiet life was soon interrupted by an unlooked-for sorrow. Thursday.[113] "Heard of Eliot's death from Pitt; and from Rose saying how much Pitt was affected. Deeply hurt by Eliot's death—kept awake at night by it. Heard yesterday too of Lord Malmesbury's

[111] Mr. Samuel Smith's. [112] Diary, Sept. 18.
[113] Diary, Sept. 21.

return, re infectâ. Much affected by this too, and regret my plan of open dealing had not been adopted."

Great as was his grief for the loss of Mr. Eliot, he looked with Christian thankfulness upon the gathering in to rest of one so ripe for his removal. In him sorrow had accomplished a blessed work—and to the very last letter he had written, Mr. Wilberforce now turned again with deepened interest. "Your sister's resigned and composed state of mind," he had written[114] on the death of Dr. Clarke, "must be a real consolation to you; her well-founded religious principles and habits must stand her in great stead. When a similar calamity befell me, I now think I was little better than an infidel; but it pleased God to sanctify His visitation, and gradually to draw me by it to a better mind. My present infirmity, I am well-nigh convinced, is sent upon the same errand: the necessity for it I sincerely submit to His wisdom, but the effects I certainly feel and willingly acknowledge to have been spiritually beneficial. My thoughts have been much more settled, less disposed to wander and to dwell upon the world or the enjoyments of sense, and my imagination much less uncontrollable than heretofore. For all this I am truly thankful, and though not quite free from the remains of my complaint, I do not pray to God to relieve me from them, if it is to be at the expense of these more substantial blessings. In the mean while, by His goodness I am free from any very considerable uneasiness; and if my service

[114] To W. Wilberforce Esq., Aug. 30.

be to 'stand and wait,' it is hitherto without pain, and I trust without impatience: after all, however, I do not mean to state myself as despairing of being restored to more exertion."

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"Bath, Sept. 27, 1797.

"My dear Muncaster,

I cannot but touch on the topic, which you will conceive engages much of my thoughts, the death of my excellent friend Eliot. You knew his exterior, and pleasing indeed it was, and in one particular expressive of his character; but perhaps no one but myself knew him thoroughly. He was so modest, retiring, and unassuming, that neither in point of understanding, nor of religious and moral character, did he generally possess his proper estimation. I can truly say, that I scarcely know any one whose loss I have so much cause to regret. But I have the solid satisfaction of knowing that his mind was just in the state I should have wished, had I been aware of the awful change which awaited him. Peace be with him. May my last end. be like his! You will not he sorry to hear, that as Rose who was an eye-witness informed me, the effect produced on Mr. Pitt by the news, which came in a letter from Lord Eliot by the common post with his others, exceeded conception. Rose says he never saw, and never expects to see, any thing like it. To Pitt, the loss of Eliot is a loss indeed—and then his poor little girl.

"This event is not unconnected in my mind with that of the rupture of the negociation; but I have not time to trace the bonds of connexion. Some will occur to you. I look forward with awe, but without dismay. I cannot believe we shall be cut off. Scourged, and severely too, we deserve to be. Even yet there is no recognition of the providence of God. I well remember your pointing out to me last year, the first lesson for Sunday se'nnight last.[115] It struck me forcibly this season. Blessed be God, there is a secure and unchangeable portion reserved for those who diligently and humbly seek for it. May we, my dear friend, be incited to renewed alacrity in this most important of all pursuits, by the stormy and turbulent state of worldly affairs. Kindest wishes for all your house from Mrs. W. (who knows you by character,) as well as from,

yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Did you see in the papers," he wrote to Mrs. Hannah More, "the account of poor Eliot's death; yet why *poor* Eliot? He was I verily believe a real Christian, and it is a singular satisfaction to me, to have received a little before his departure a letter from him, breathing a spirit of the truest humility and resignation. I feel his loss deeply, and shall continue to feel it; for except Henry Thornton, there is no one living with whom I was so much in the habit of con-

[115] Jer. v. or xxii.

sulting, and whose death so breaks in on all my plans in all directions. We were engaged in a multitude of pursuits together, and he was a bond of connexion, which was sure never to fail, between me and Pitt; because a bond not of political, nor merely of a personal quality, but formed by a consciousness of common sentiments, interests, and feelings. Well—he I trust is happy, and he is not improbably taken away from much suffering and sorrow. Pitt has almost been overwhelmed with it; I believe he suffers more from the very texture of his firm mind. You will observe that the blow comes just when he has also to bear up against what deeply shocks him, Lord Malmesbury's return, re infectâ. Poor fellow! pray that the grace of God may yet visit him. He is the first of natural men, but 'he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'

"I took up my pen to say to you that I wish much to have a conference with you, and Lieut.-Gen. Patty, before it be long. We must come over and dine with you, unless you could without inconvenience give us the meeting some day at Bristol. I mean to visit some schools there under an extraordinary man, who introduced himself to us the other evening, and quite *stunned* us. He had heard of Mrs. Wilberforce's wish (conceiving she is likely to be here once or twice every year) to devise some plan of turning her Bath visits to good account, and we know of no better object than the education of the indigent and friendless. But it is on this subject that we wish to discuss with

you, so be ready, that we may profit from your experience. The School of Industry falls off sadly. The numbers have decreased within a year from one hundred and sixty to one hundred, and that number cannot be continued. I have written to Phillott and Sibley desiring to see them, and I mean to try what I can make of them; meanwhile send me any hints."

"I have not till this moment got your very affecting letter," replies Mrs. Hannah More.[116] "Your very touching account of Mr. Pitt's sorrow has gone to all our hearts. I had anticipated the strong grief of that strong mind. Though it is late, I will not lose a moment in answering the most pressing, though not the most interesting part of your letter, because I am anxious to prevent your involving yourself. The boasted *liberality* on which they value themselves in the conduct of the Bristol schools is that relaxing toleration, which enables them to combine Quakers and Presbyterians, '*the sprinkled and the dipped,*' by insisting on no peculiar form of worship or religious instruction; so that I fear in this accommodating and comprehensive plan, Christianity slips through their fingers. I hope and believe they inculcate industry, but I never went to see them myself, because I think they are carried on in a way I could not commend, and which it might not be right to censure. The manager is a man who will torment you to death, if you give him the entrée. He is as vain as Erskine in another way; absurd and

[116] Sept. 26.

injudicious, and as fond of fame as Alexander. With all this, he is sober, temperate, laborious, and charitable; but one with whom I never, and you never, could coalesce, with views and motives so dissimilar."

A visit to Cowslip Green soon followed. "Received most cordially — the round — Shipham, Axbridge, Cheddar, all flourishing.[117] Monday. Blagden; but few children there. On Tuesday, returned to Bath, bringing Mrs. More with us. Heard of Lord Lonsdale's reformation through my book. Went to the School of Industry." "Asked to subscribe to Jay's velvet cushion, but refused." "Dr. Fraser dined with us—he says that Mackintosh is grown antidemocratical. Saturday. At dinner had Dr. and Miss Maclaine, and Miss Bowdler. Rational spirited conversation. B— called, and talked about schools."[118] "No time at Bath for reading or composing. Letters, newspapers, and calls, consume so much time."

In such pursuits passed the first recess after his marriage.

[117] Diary, Sunday, Oct. 1.

[118] Diary, Oct. 7.

CHAPTER XIV.

NOVEMBER 1797 TO JUNE 1798.

New session—Support of government—Tripling the assessed taxes—Voluntary contributions for the public service—Self-control—Origin of Church Missionary Society—Correspondence with Stephen and Pitt on the newly-acquired West Indian settlements—Feelings towards ministry and opposition—Letter to William Smith—Engagement for observance of Sunday—Abolition again defeated—Pitt's duel with Tierney—Letter on church preferment.

UPON the 1st of November Mr. Wilberforce returned to London, to be present at the opening of the session. The conduct of the French government during the negociation of the summer months, convinced him that it was his duty as a loyal subject to strengthen the hands of administration; and on the first night of the session he made an effective reply . . "moved by Bryan Edwards, and suddenly up, too warm and unguarded, I fear"[1] . . to an extravagant eulogy upon the political conduct of Mr. Fox. "Hurried," he writes a few days later,[2] "beyond all comfortable bearing, and having more to do than I can execute—I am going to read the papers which give an account of the

[1] Diary, Nov. 2.

[2] To Thomas Babington Esq. Nov. 6.

negociation. I once was ready to give up all we have conquered, either from France or her allies; *now*, after the hostile mind she has discovered towards us, and our recent experience of the effrontery of her rulers, I would not make peace without reserving either Ceylon or the Cape; not both. I rather think of declaring this publicly. As for Trinidada, it is not worth having."

"Hitherto," he tells Lord Muncaster,[3] "you have not lost much by not having come amongst us; (I speak of you in your political, not your personal capacity;) whether we have lost much (still speaking of you politically) you can best tell us. We seem to me to be in a sad flat state. This at least is my own condition; entertaining daily worse and worse sentiments of opposition, and not over-well pleased with ministry. I should be glad to talk matters over with you. I presume you have read the papers. On the whole they read well for us. Yet I wish we had taken a different course, and instead of sending over a man of diplomatic note, who considered his character as a negociator at stake, that we had employed some plain man of known firmness and simplicity both of manners and conduct. I wish also that we had at once named the lowest terms on which we would treat, declaring that we had gone as far for the sake of peace as we could do consistently with the honour and safety of the country, and making public too our offers. Even yet I think there would have been a chance, though speaking

[3] Nov. 10.

impartially I fear not a great one, that we should have got peace on the spot; and that even if the Revolution of the 4th of September had taken place, the new directory would not have dared to recommence the war. But I am clear that these fellows now in power have been resolved ever since they came into authority, not to make peace with us at all. Well, there is then nothing left for us but to go on, waiting for a moment of returning sanity in our enemies. But I confess my apprehensions are great. Our expenses are the first cause of alarm, and though I trust reforms will be made, and even our establishment curtailed, yet all that can be saved that way will be inconsiderable in a practical view.

"The newspapers as usual on both sides misstated me in what I said on the first day of the session; and I suppose they will as little state me fairly in reporting a few words I found it necessary to throw out to-night, in consequence of a very pugnacious speech of Dr. Lawrence. I have thought it right in the present emergency to avow my conviction that government have honestly sought for peace; and though I have rather hinted that I might not quite agree with them as to terms, yet I have laid the blame of the failure of the negociation on our enemies, where I really conceive it to be due. It is of extreme importance that the nation should be convinced of this. Heavy burthens will be necessary, and this only will make people bear them with any tolerable patience. You hear of the projected new

imposition of a sum for every individual occupying an assessed house, equal to three times the amount of all he now pays for assessed taxes. I fear this will press hard on some people. I am clear there must be an exception in favour of those with families above a certain number, and incomes below a certain sum.

"I thought, my dear Muncaster, you would like this dish of politics, and yet it really has sickened me to serve it up to you; so surfeited am I with this species of fare."

Mr. Pitt's scheme for raising the supplies came before the House of Commons upon the 24th of November. "House—finance—Pitt let off on tripling the assessed taxes. Vexed that I could not get an opportunity of answering Tierney. Pitt foolish though, and wrong, to crush him." The debate was renewed upon the 4th of December. "It went off," he writes on the following day,[4] "well upon the whole, except that Windham made a mischievous speech which I in vain endeavoured to stop, about his retaining all his Burkish opinions, and its being of no consequence whether government had been sincere or not in the negociations. Tierney, who was much beyond his usual point in speaking, was truly Jacobinical. The Speaker did himself great credit, both by the matter and manner of what he uttered. He intimated that he was willing to contribute to the public necessities, and did it so handsomely as to smooth the way for government to follow;

[4] To Lord Muncaster, Dec. 5.

instead of appearing to shame them into it, and thereby rendering it more difficult."

On this subject he was now exerting himself greatly. "Saw very little of Pitt this last week—vexed him by plain dealing. Talked with others on economy."[5] "Fox's language at the Whig club," he writes, Dec. 6th, "throws light, if any were wanting, upon their secession. It is my firm opinion, that a conviction of their weakness alone prevents their taking up the sword against government. Now in such a state of things, it is in the highest degree important that administration should conciliate the good-will, confirm the confidence, and animate the public spirit, of all who are really attached to the constitution. This can be done only by reforming any manifest abuse, by retrenching needless expenses, and by making personal sacrifices. It has long been my opinion, that next to the violence of opposition, this country has most to dread from the unbounded acquiescence of those who support administration. I have been urging these considerations in private upon Mr. Pitt, but unless my hands are strengthened, I doubt of my success. He is really—I say it solemnly, appealing to Heaven for the truth of my declaration—in my judgment one of the most public-spirited and upright, and the most desirous of spending the nation's money economically, and of making sacrifices for the general good, of all the men I ever knew: but I have met only with two or three

[5] Diary, Nov. 26.

(except truly religious men) who have been able to do obnoxious duties, and above all to act in opposition to the feelings of false honour, by resisting the improvidence and restraining the weakness of colleagues. I have not time to express my meaning clearly, but you may perhaps perceive it. If the real friends of government could make a united representation to them of their solicitude for the public interests, of their attachment to the constitution, and to the administration, (the safety of which they believed intimately connected with the public welfare,) of their willingness to bear burdens and make sacrifices, provided only they should be enabled to refute the objections of those who urge official abuses, profuse expenditure, &c.; administration might be compelled by a kind violence, to consult their own welfare and honour, and the national interest."[6] "I have been writing to the Speaker and to Pitt, confirming one and urging the other to a relinquishment of a portion of their income during the war."[7]

These subjects he continued to urge upon the minister. "Saturday, Dec. 2nd. Dined at the Speaker's —large party, talked much with Pitt. Hatsell speaking of general corruption. 7th. Dinner at home—Morton Pitt, Colquhoun, and others—much talk about police, and assessed taxes—storm louder and louder. Colquhoun speaks of it as a most unfortunate plan. 8th. Anxious in the night about politics. Interview with Pitt—House—much discussion with Henry Thorn-

[6] To William Hey Esq. [7] Diary.

ton, who sadly worried about assessed taxes. 9th. Much serious talk with Pitt, stating the necessity of economy, and preventing profusion and jobs." "You may perhaps think," he wrote afterwards,[8] "that I was disposed to be liberal at the expense of others in advising ministers and official men to give up a part of their incomes; but in truth, though I originally contended against encouraging the voluntary contributions as a general measure, yet when they had been set on foot, I subscribed at the Bank what, with my assessed taxes which are extremely low, amounted to near an eighth of my clear income, and also contributed in my parish, and for Mrs. Wilberforce in the ladies' subscription."

On the night of the 14th, when the question was next discussed, "Fox and Sheridan returned. Fox speaking well on assessed taxes:—much shaken. I think Pitt must give them up. House very late. 18th. Tierney's motion on Dundas's place—spoke for him." Whilst the Assessed Tax Bill was passing through the House, he was "exerting" himself "to prevail upon the merchants and bankers in the city, to bring forward in the commercial world a proportionate impost upon all property."[9] "Morning" of Dec. 18th, "off to city, to try to rouse the monied men to exertion—saw several who are for contribution. 19th. House. Spoke warmly and plainly for public contribution. Tierney animadverted—very hot House. 20th. To the city, to stir up some life amongst citizens

[8] To W. Hey Esq. March 15, 1798. [9] To W. Hey Esq.

for contribution of property. 21st. To the city again on the same business—got them to agree to meet. House. Assessed taxes committee."

At this time he wrote to Lord Muncaster,

"My dear Muncaster,

I must answer your question about Lord Duncan. It is not only true that after the action he ordered all the crew who could be mustered on deck, and directed his chaplain to read the Thanksgiving, in which they were exhorted by the gallant Admiral to join, as having such reason to be thankful; but (as Dundas told a friend of mine) just before the fleet got into action, having given all the necessary orders he retired into his cabin, and offered up an earnest prayer to God to support him in the approaching trying hour, and to bless his arms with victory; and, added Dundas, 'when the brave old veteran told me this the tears ran down his manly cheeks.' Knowing you would like to hear this anecdote, I put it down for you whilst fresh in my mind.

"Our plan of finance is on its passage through the committee. We have granted already great exemptions; but I own I fear we must concede to people the permission to lessen their assessments by reducing their establishments. I have been for the last two or three days amongst the city gentlemen, to urge them to come forward with an invitation to us to attempt the plan of a tax on all property of every kind, of .1 per cent on the capital or so much on

the income. But I fear there is not public spirit enough to make my endeavour of any avail. However, there is to be a meeting to-morrow, to consider. O my dear fellow, I see too much of the interior of things to be comfortable.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"22nd. Off to the city. Breakfasted at Henry Thornton's—about capital contribution. The meeting held." "It was most respectably attended, and they went so far as to propose to Mr. Pitt, the measure I desired."[10] "Henry Thornton and others to Pitt with it. 23rd. Pitt's about the plan. Found him rational and full of it. Talking with him for half an hour." Yet "after all nothing came of it." His support of the Assessed Taxes Bill was of great importance to the ministry; as it evinced the judgment of an independent man in favour of its absolute necessity. "Nothing," he declared, "can make me support it, but the consciousness that we have no alternative. I dread the venomous ranklings which it will produce, during the three years of its operation."[11]

The part he took rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the opposition, and in the debate upon the final passing of the Bill, Mr. Fox charged him with indulging in acrimonious personalities. "Fox," he says, "unjustly accusing me. Uneasy—fearing that I had

[10] To William Hey Esq. March, 1798
[11] To William Hey Esq. Jan. 1, 1798

been guilty." "I was sadly disturbed," he writes afterwards, upon a fuller examination of his conduct, "at Fox's imputations—too much alas, on scrutinizing, from the fear of losing credit with all, even the moderate oppositionists. But I think I can appeal to God that his charge was false, and that I feel even good-will to him. Oh may I learn to distrust and keep my heart with all diligence."[12]

Having just rendered him such material service, he was much hurt by Mr. Pitt's conduct on the night the Bill passed through committee, in rejecting some slight exemptions which he pressed earnestly upon him. "Dec. 30th. House very late on Assessed Taxes. I sparred with Pitt, and he negatived several exempting clauses. I much cut, and angry." "Alas! alas!" is his reflection on the following day, "with what shame ought I to look at myself! What conflicting passions yesterday in the House of Commons—mortification —anger—resentment, from such conduct in Pitt; though I ought to expect it from him, and can well bear with his faults towards God—all these feelings working with anger at myself, from the consciousness that I was not what a Christian should be. Oh what a troubled state! When I got home I prayed to God, and looked to him for help through Christ, and have in some measure found my heart restored to peace and love, to reconciliation, (which in the House was but hollow I fear,) and to a desire of returning good for evil, of being above the little slights and

[12] Journal, Jan. 14, 1798.

rufflements of this life, looking upwards and forwards. Yet even still I find my heart disposed to harbour angry thoughts. I have found the golden rule useful in quieting my mind—putting myself in Pitt's place, &c. May this teach me to know myself, to walk more watchfully, to seek more earnestly for strength, help, and peace, and love, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Oh may God guide me."[13]

Though he had been so much occupied by public business since his return to London, yet his letters and journals refer continually to other important engagements. "Dined and slept at Battersea Rise," he enters on Nov. 9th, "for Missionary meeting—Simeon—Charles Grant—Venn. Something, but not much, done—Simeon in earnest." This was the first commencement of a plan for promoting enlarged missionary exertion, to which he had recourse upon the failure of his efforts to obtain by vote of parliament some national provision for christianizing India. It occupied his attention for the two following years, and issued, in the year 1800, in the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. "Nov. 23rd. Proclamation Society's meeting. Erskine wanting to wave bringing up Williams[14] for judgment—said he would not compromise his character for any set of men. We firm." "Much interested all this week about Hull vicarage." This was just vacant by the death of Joseph Milner, "the simple honest fellow you saw in Palace Yard," he tells Lord Muncaster. "Your

[13] Journal, Sunday, Dec. 31. [14] Publisher of Paine's Age of Reason.

sympathetic kindness had too well anticipated Isaac Milner's feelings. He is the most affectionate of brothers, and the loss has been like tearing off a limb. I hope he will get over it, but it has shaken him sorely."[15] "All the time I have been writing, poor Milner has been in my mind."[16] "Friday. A. Y. with us alone. Interesting talk, eager and vehement. I wish he were walking more softly. Talked with Chancellor about Graham's scrape, and heard his ideas about Methodists." "Saturday, Nov. 25th. M. at breakfast explaining his affairs—shamefully used. Poor fellow! his bad character from former misconduct will make it difficult to serve him." "Tuesday. Gave dinner. Mitford, Henry Legge, Thornton, Unwin, &c. St. Helen's snapped up by Stadtholder. They staid late chatting. Rational day." "Dec. 11th. To Fulham, Bishop of London's, to dinner—by ourselves—much talk, evening, with him. Letter about my book, and his answer[17] to a man about his religious state—serious, humble, and very pleasing. Mr. Owen curate of Fulham to tea and supper. Next morning the Archbishop came to breakfast, and we discussed long about church matters. I telling them much."

"Though I have been quietly at church," he says, noting his state of feelings on the 18th of December,[18] "and not in the cavalcade, yet how little has

[15] Dec. 5. [16] To William Hey Esq.
[17] Vid. the answer in Hodgson's "Life of Porteus," p. 295.
[18] The Public Thanksgiving-Day.

my heart joined in the prayers of the day! How little am I impressed as I ought to be with a sense of heavenly things! and yet I hope I am labouring after them, and striving to raise my mind. I go to prayer, to bless God for His mercies; and I will enumerate several:—Public and political blessings;—His kindnesses to myself personally. I will pray to Him for my country, and for wisdom for myself, to teach me how to act. Oh may the resolution to live for His glory be uppermost in my soul, and may I learn a holy resignation to His will; endeavouring to work whilst it is day, and yet to be easy, cheerful, disinterested, composed, and happy, enjoying the peace of God."

"I may be indispensably occupied to-morrow, (December 31st,) so let me now look back on the past year, and bless God for its many mercies. Oh how wonderful are His ways! An eventful year with me—my book—my marriage—health restored in sickness. How ungrateful have I been, and how often tempting God to withdraw from me! But His mercy endureth for ever; and the vilest, prostrating himself before Him with penitence and faith in the blood of Jesus, may obtain remission of his sins, and the Spirit of renewing grace. This is my hope—here I rest my foot. Friends died this year—Eliot—Dr. Clarke—Joseph Milner. I still spared. How strongly do these events teach us that the time is short! Oh! may I learn and be wise. Public events—mutiny termi-

nated—Dutch victory. I will go to pray, and humble myself before God. The lessons I have learned of my defects teach me to strive earnestly against pride; inordinate love of the favour of man; every feeling of malice; selfishness in not judging fairly between others and myself; above all, earthly-mindedness, not having my mind raised above the region of storms. May I learn wisdom and watchfulness from past falls, and so grow in grace. Oh what a blessed thing is the Sunday for giving us an opportunity of serious self-examination, retrospect, and drawing water out of the wells of salvation." [19]

The Christmas recess was spent by him at Bath, where he complains that his "time was frittered away in calls and dining out. Let me try to get more time for meditation and Scripture. I have read barely a chapter each day through this hurrying week. Dining out every day has a bad effect on the mind; I will try to dine at home, at least once, and if I can twice every week." "Entire solitude I find a different thing from even being with my wife only; it seems to give me over more entirely to the power, and throw me more absolutely upon the mercy, of God. Oh what cause have I for gratitude! but my heart has been cold—it is overgrown with weeds; may God enable me at this crowded place to live to His glory." [20] "This morning I thought I felt some of the powers of the world to come when I went to

[19] Journal. [20] Journal, Jan. 14.

church. G. broke in upon my walk intended for meditation. I have found this week the benefit of reading Scripture almost daily."[21]

To Mrs. Wilberforce who remained in Palace Yard, he writes at the same time, "Let us endeavour to feel that gratitude which the goodness we have experienced should inspire. When I compare my lot with that of almost every other member of parliament whom I know, what singular blessings have been vouchsafed me! I was careless, dissipated, ardent in pursuit of reputation, and by this time, but for religion, should have been a prey to the workings of ambition. Why am I taken and another left?.... It quite grieves me for your sake, to have but a poor account to render of myself. I had a sad night again, and in consequence am far from well to-day; but He who had not where to lay His head, had doubtless sleepless nights and languid days, as I have," &c.

By the 3rd of February he was again in town, and engaged in his usual incessant occupations. "Your letter," he tells Mr. Stephen, "found me in a crowd, and I have ever since been, and still am, in company; but amid conversation and interruption, I take up my pen to return a few hasty words of reply." Mr. Stephen had now openly avowed his devotion to the cause of Abolition. "You are now at liberty to make my intelligence as public as you please, if it may do any good. I no longer wish for any reserve as to any thing I have done, or may do, in relation

[21] Journal, Jan. 28.

to that subject."[22] He undertook it as a sacred cause, and the whole energy of his powerful mind was directed to its conduct. One of his letters[23] to Mr. Wilberforce strikingly displays his ingenuity and ardour. After tracing marks of retribution for their crimes towards the negroes, in events which had recently convulsed the other nations of Europe, "it remains only," he continues, "that Great Britain, certainly their most implacable enemy, should feel the last disabling inflictions of the scourge she has well deserved. My views of the event are awful and alarming, but only, I confess, under this aspect. It is not in our party divisions, in our falling credit, our broken Bank, (for such in spite of delusion it is,) nor in the force of our enemy; but it is in the marriage of our national interests to the detestable commerce of Liverpool, and the oppression of the West Indies, that I foresee our political destruction. Dundas will go on to waste our last energies between the tropics, Pitt will support him, and you and your friends will support Pitt, till Africa has no longer a foe to fear in Great Britain. It is for this that Pitt was made eloquent, and great, and, if you will, virtuous; 'all that a man can be who is not religious,' and for this that the opposition are wicked and dangerous characters: the strength of our government, the support of good men to it; the strength of France, and its falling into the hands of bad men . . these and

[22] Letter from James Stephen Esq. Aug. 22, 1797.
[23] Sept. 20, 1797.

all the other uncommon circumstances that have existed and do exist, to kindle and inflame the war and to carry it to extremes, have all been concerted in the cabinet of heaven to bring forth its long oppressed, degraded children with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm.

"But you will think me half mad, and wholly presumptuous. I cannot help it: I must divulge these thoughts to somebody, and who is likely to make more allowance for them than you? you, who are the Moses of these Israelites, though at the same time a courtier of Pharaoh."

This ardour in the cause, directed by an accurate acquaintance with the actual state of the West Indies, made Mr. Stephen's aid invaluable. It was always accepted with readiness and cordiality. "Stephen," says the Diary,[24] "frankly and kindly reproving me for not pleading the cause of the slaves watchfully enough, and guarding it in the case of Trinidad, and Spain's late proposals. I doubt. Pitt promises repeal of the proclamation for trade with Spanish colonies." Yet to this subject he had not been slow to call the minister's attention. While at Bath he had written

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

"Jan. 30, 1798.

"My dear Pitt,

My head and heart have both been long full of some thoughts which I wished to state to you, when a

[24] Feb. 25.

little less under extreme pressure than during the sitting of parliament.

"Perhaps even yet you may not have happened to see an order in council, allowing, notwithstanding the war, an intercourse to subsist between our West Indian colonies and those of Spain, in which negro slaves are the chief articles for us to supply. I know these commercial matters are not within your department, and that therefore your assent is perhaps asked, if at all, when your mind is full of other subjects. But let me only remind you, that the House of Commons did actually pass the Bill for abolishing the foreign Slave Trade, and that if contracts are made again for supplying Spain for a term of years, it may throw obstacles in the way. It would give me more pleasure than I can express, to find that any further measures, or even thoughts on this subject . . . painful to me for many reasons . . . were rendered needless, by my hearing the order was revoked.

"Every one is calling out to you to summon the nation to arm itself in the common defence. You hear how nobly my Yorkshiremen are acting. I must have more discussion on that head, for they still wish you to impose an equal rate on all property.

Yours ever sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Another question which speedily arose, shows the importance as well as the earnestness of Mr. Stephen's remonstrances. The removal of the Carib tribes

after the insurrection in the island of St. Vincent's, and the conquest of Trinidad in 1797, had opened their virgin lands to British enterprise and capital. In the arrangements to which these events gave rise, Mr. Pitt had almost consented to a plan which, though intended to prevent the importation of Africans for the cultivation of our acquired possessions, would in fact have led to the removal of the creole slaves from our older islands, to the unhealthy work of clearing new lands. Mr. Stephen's local knowledge discovered to him at once the consequences which would follow the adoption of these measures.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE ESQ.

"Saturday morning.

"My dear Sir,

The Carib lands lie heavy at my heart. I never doubted that as Naboth was killed, his vineyard would sooner or later be taken possession of; but it is too much, that, to save hypocritical appearances, the deed should be done in a way productive of a twofold portion of human misery, and that you and I should be made accessories to this aggravation.

"I learnt on Thursday evening, from new authority, that Mr. Pitt has come into their secret plans, and has pledged himself to a committee of the murderous band, that the lands shall be granted on those terms. An opulent planter of St. Vincent's is raising a large sum by annuities, disadvantageous though the resource is, that he may buy up negroes in the old islands, and be ready to plunge deep into the golden mine that is

opening. Speculation is opening her rapacious mouth in other directions towards the same object; and Lloyd's Coffee House is in a roar of merriment, at the dexterous compromise Mr. Pitt has made between his religious friends and his and Dundas's West India supporters. Well may the slave merchants laugh at this wise plan of giving them a new market in the old islands, where payment is more secure, for the sake of not opening to them an equal one in a new settlement, with such unsafe paymasters as new settlers generally are! Well may the planters also laugh, since they will, by being already proprietors of slaves, have a great advantage over new adventurers, whether they choose to buy lands, or to sell slaves at the inflamed prices of ardent speculation, and supply their places gradually by new purchases from the slave ships. But they have a still better prospect from this happy compromise. Can they wish a better means of supporting their false theories, than the experiment of raising or keeping up a creole stock of slaves on estates yet to be cleared of wood—the mortality incident to the clearing and settling new lands being great indeed? How will they exult over you in a few years, (should Heaven permit them to scourge their species so long,) when it appears that your new colony, settled on *Abolition principles*, can neither keep up its numbers, nor exist without supplies from Africa! It will cost them then nothing to deny what no man will now refuse to admit, that new lands are generally fatal to their first cultivators in the West Indies.

"But this is all nothing to the other considerations I

mentioned to you. The poor creole negroes bought or removed for this purpose, instead of an amelioration of their lot, as your exertions and the aspect of events promised them, will be torn from all the little comforts they possess, and from almost all their connexions for ever; even from their immediate families in general, for few, if any, women or children are sent to clear and settle new lands; and all this for no end, but that new imported wretches may be broken in to their miserable destiny upon their old estates instead of new ones. I beg Mr. Pitt's pardon, I had forgot the more important end of his reputation. You will say I am uncandid here; but really my charity does not go so far as to believe it possible he can be innocent of indirect and selfish views on this occasion. He may not have adverted to these consequences—that I admit is very probable, nor may he see as I do the utter impossibility of attaining by any laws or regulations the concurrent end he professes to have in view, which I understood from you last Sunday is the preventing African negroes being substituted for those taken away from other colonies or other estates. But where are these laws or regulations? Should they not have at least preceded his irreversible concession? Should he not first have been assured of their sufficiency as well as their enactment? *The commission is making out, if not already made. The commissioners are named.* Was he overreached? Did he not know that the characters he treated with were West Indians? Did he not feel that circumspection

was necessary, and that he ought at least to have consulted you, or heard some counsel on the other side, before he committed himself by any engagements?

"But it is wronging his capacity to suppose him such a miserable dupe, and that after all he has seen, after all his own eloquence has exposed, of the insincerity and fraud, as well as the incurable obstinacy, of your opponents and the West India legislatures; after all the difficulties he has seen in the way of the broadest, simplest, and most authoritative regulations in the colonies; he could be blind to the consequences of allowing this commission to issue without a previous foundation laid for its due execution by acts of St. Vincent's and of the other assemblies, transmitted and approved of here. Besides, he told you of the plan—*that* I know—he had not got your answer, at least your approbation. Little did I suppose when you hinted the plan, and I lost some opportunities of drawing your attention to it, that the veto was to be withdrawn without further consultation, much less without that provision for its due execution, which I knew would open long and complex discussions. Had his interference been spontaneous, more hesitation would be due in condemning this hollow compromise; but it was prompted by you; by his fear of losing your very powerful support; a fear which, had it not been relieved by a knowledge of the strong hold he had on you, would long since, I verily believe, have produced the Abolition of the Slave Trade. It is the judgment perhaps of a biassed man; but of one who has heard

your defence for him, powerful in my feelings for the advocate, and of one who is not his enemy, and would have been warmly his friend, but for this very opinion.

"But whither am I travelling? Not finding you at Palace Yard yesterday or this morning, I sat down (at a busy time) to say a few words, and not to write a long letter. I might have gone to Broomfield almost as soon: and yet I have still to say what is most material. Have you stopped, or have you any hopes of stopping, this measure? If not the commission itself, can you at least prevail to get the pernicious qualification withdrawn, that we may not have to reproach ourselves with having been the authors of the misery that will flow from it? I say *we*, because you told me once I had been the means of stopping the grants when they were to have been unqualified. If you can do neither, I think I am bound in conscience to try what *I* can do through the Morning Chronicle, by a public developement of the iniquitous compromise and its tendencies.

"Without consulting you I would not do this, because you once complained of my conduct in a similar case, and my heart took home the accusation. God forbid I should sin again against a friendship which is the honour and happiness of my life.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours very respectfully, and

very affectionately,

J. STEPHEN."

"Your letter finds me," replies Mr. Wilberforce, "not very well, with tired eyes and a fatigued head; but it calls forth the little animation of which I am capable, and I need not say, interests me deeply. I take shame to myself that I did not make it my business to see Mr. Pitt on this important subject, in consequence of what you said to me on Saturday last. I could make a tolerable excuse to others, but I own I cannot quite excuse myself. However, what I can do I will: immediately writing to Mr. Pitt, and bespeaking an interview with him before he goes any further. Notwithstanding what you say, I cannot conceive that he has made any concession which would in fairness bind him, (if any compact could be valid when productive of such effects as you anticipate,) supposing the principle on which he has conceived himself consenting impracticable and fallacious.

"As for your Morning Chronicle, God forbid, (I say it ex imo,) that from any delicacy of friendship you should forbear for a moment from any thing which might really tend ever so little to the prevention of misery and bloodshed. I fairly own to you I see no good in such a discussion, but much evil. I must lay down my pen; indeed I scribble this amid talking and business. I will only say, go on to prick me into constant attention to this subject, and for any defect of candour of which you speak towards a certain person, (and I will fairly say I think you are liable to the charge, but in no greater degree than is common,)

we will reserve that for conversation. Let me see you on Tuesday. I will if possible see Mr. Pitt previously, and know how the case stands."

His private remonstrances with the minister succeeded after a time in stopping the objectionable plan. "At last got the proclamation about slaves rescinded."[25] Mr. Stephen's vehement zeal could scarcely rest contented without a public denunciation of the measure. "I still clearly think," he wrote, "that you have been improperly silent, and that when you see the government loading the bloody altars of commerce, the idol of this Carthage, with an increase of human victims, and building new altars for the same execrable purpose, while the sword of Almighty vengeance seems uplifted over us for that very offence, you are bound by the situation wherein you have placed yourself to cry aloud against it. You are even the rather bound to do so, because those high priests of Moloch, Lord Liverpool and Mr. Dundas, are your political, and Mr. Pitt also your private friend." "Go on, my dear sir," is Mr. Wilberforce's answer, "and welcome. Believe me, I wish you not to abate any thing of the force or frankness of your animadversions. I have not yet had the opportunity of deliberately and fully questioning myself on the charge you have brought, but I mean to enter into as impartial a self-examination as I am able on that head, and then I may perhaps call upon you to justify. For your frankness

[25] Diary, April 1.

however I feel myself obliged. Openness is the only foundation and preservative of friendship, and though by it I have lost some friends, or I should rather say have discovered that I never possessed them, yet it has cemented and attached me still more closely to the two best I have in the world. Let me therefore claim from you at all times your undisguised opinions. I promise on my part as impartial a deliberation as I am able to exercise, and I hope if I am convinced I shall be able to act up to my convictions. I will even concede that I ought studiously to guard against a bias to which I am liable, if not from personal connexion, yet from an apprehension of mischief from weakening government, and strengthening the hands of opposition. Nothing is more useful to any man acting in situations and matters complicated in their relations and bearings, and in which the passions may creep in, than to talk things over with a man of sense, who lives with a different set, and has different prejudices and attachments. May I be able to act with fidelity in my important station, and be more solicitous to acquit myself to God and my own conscience, than to my fellow-creatures." "I trust," says his Diary after a conversation on the subject, "that I have preserved the due medium: all think me wrong." He was in truth, at this time, in little danger from that bias which Mr. Stephen suspected. His public course was marked rather by distrust of the opposition than by confidence in administration.

A reply to a letter from Mr. William Smith[26] plainly discovers this state of feeling.

"The motion for Abolition shall be made in about a fortnight. Poor William Dickson is in town; he looks forlorn, and most sincerely do I wish I could effectually serve him. I shall be very glad to consult with you on this subject. As to serving him with administration, which he cannot help looking to I see, you have nearly as much interest in that quarter as I have, and I do not know how to put it more strongly.

"And this leads me naturally to that part of your letter which interests me most. I think you are right, my dear William, in proposing that we should keep up a more frequent intercourse, and in the effect likely to be produced by it on both our minds. And yet I must frankly say that you wrong me when you state that I have asperities against the opposition. It is occasionally part of my Sunday's occupation to look into the state of my heart in this relation, and to discipline it in a way which might seem almost too mechanical to any one who had not considered sufficiently the structure and workings of the human mind. I impress on myself the uncertainty of all political opinions, and how often different practical judgments in persons who agree in abstract principles arise from differences as to matters of fact, and as to the credit they give respectively to different sources of intelligence. Then I put myself in the situation of an opposition man, and call up the ideas, with their proper apparel and in

[26] Feb. 20.

their several bearings, which present themselves to *his* mental eye. Then I consider how naturally the opposition men are irritated by constant failure, and by their feeling that they and theirs are suffering, and likely to suffer, from what they conceive to be incapacity or wicked intentions, which they have in vain been striving to counteract. Above all, I view the several leading men in connexion with religious topics. I consider their sad state, till I truly feel for them; and this it is impossible to do without emotions of cordial good-will rising up into action. I trust I can sincerely declare, that I sometimes look at them thus (and something of these sensations I experience at this very moment) with emotions of enlarged and unmixed affection. Now this process tends to leave my mind softened and warmed towards them. But it does not alter my views of the consequences of their measures, or of the necessity of warning the public of what appears to me (speaking in the presence of God) the urgent duty of counteracting their hostile attempts against the present government.

"I wish I had plenty of time, that I might let you still more into my sentiments. I believe I did once hint to you (what I cannot express in writing) whence I dreaded the storm breaking forth. But it appears to me to be my duty while I fill the forward political situation I now enjoy, (let me retract that term for possess, it is no enjoyment; how often do Mrs. W. and I wish for private life! as often

as we dare indulge such an idea,) to use my utmost endeavours for repressing this approaching mischief. To be honest with you, I must confess that I feel more real spleen against administration than against opposition, and that for many reasons; some I fear too personal, for self, alas, will creep in and taint the purity of our motives; but still more, I hope, on good and substantial grounds. It seems to me that they have had (and even still have) it in their power, I will not say to dispel the cloud which hangs over this country, but to brighten our prospects materially, and that, by means the most virtuous, the most praiseworthy, the most honourable to themselves. I have submitted to that most painful duty of remonstrating against what I thought wrong, of urging what I fel right; and perhaps with a heart galled and wounded and saddened by neglect, and frustration, and anticipation of evil, I have had to fulfil the duty (for such on the whole it has appeared to me) of defending them and rebutting their opponents.

"Having thus far hinted the state of my mind, I will, however, declare my solemn conviction that you greatly injure Mr. Pitt by the opinion you entertain of him. And it is my deliberate judgment, formed on much experience, and close observation, that he has more disinterested patriotism and a purer mind than almost (I scarce need say almost) any man, not under the influence of Christian principles, I ever knew. That he has weaknesses and faults I freely confess, but a want of ardent zeal for the public welfare, and of the strict-

est love of truth, are not, I believe as God shall judge me, of the number. I speak not this from the partiality of personal affection. In fact, for several years past, there has been so little of the eadem velle and eadem nolle, that our friendship has starved for want of nutriment. I really love him for his public qualities and his private ones, though there too he is much misunderstood. But how can I expect he should love me much, who have been so long rendering myself in various ways vexatious to him, and above all, when, poor fellow, he never schools his mind by a cessation from political ruminations, the most blinding, hardening, and souring of all others?

"I have been drawn into much greater length than I was aware of, and still I have but expressed a tenth of what I teem with. But I must lay down my pen, only let me add what I said in my former letter.[27] Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, set your affections on things above; ask wisdom of God humbly and perseveringly, and read the Scriptures with a practical rather than a critical spirit. All this is right on your scheme of religion as well as on mine. Perhaps if you go on this plan we may not differ so much in religious matters. But I am running on again. Farewell, then. We will now and then exchange letters, and when you come to town, if you dislike it not, we will talk over

[27] "Belsham sent his book against mine (addressed to William Smith's wife). William Smith's and my letters." Diary, Feb. 25.

all these things at some vacant hour. Believe me with every friendly wish for you and yours,

My dear William, yours ever,

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

"I have been interrupted inter scribendum, and forced to scribble en galop. I wish I may be legible."

Many other important matters now claimed a share of his attention. He still acted as a director of the Sierra Leone Company: and that infant colony, struggling with peculiar difficulties, and visited with the ravages of European warfare, was a source of ceaseless anxiety to its conductors. "We have been," he writes to the governor, "what we call *unfortunate* in having our ships so often captured, &c. but we are a little prone (perhaps not a little) to expect to be secured by Providence against the common accidents to which human beings are liable; when engaged in works of piety and charity. It should cure us of this erroneous estimate of things to recollect that St. Paul, in recapitulating his sufferings, not only enumerates stoning and the malice of men, but 'thrice was I shipwrecked, a night and a day have I been in the deep.' In short, Providence seemed to fight against him, as well as a world which was not worthy of him."

At home he was still the watchful guardian of public morals, and at this time was especially engaged in an attempt to promote the better observance of the Sunday. "March 12th. All morning at the Bishop

of Durham's, on Sunday Bill. 13th. Bishop of London's—Sunday association—long discussion—Archbishop unwilling." The result of these deliberations was the suspension of all attempts at legislative interference, and the adoption of a voluntary engagement to promote the observance of the day. Much was effected by this effort: many amongst the highest ranks made the declaration, and faithfully observed their pledge. One great object at the present moment was to stop the Sunday entertainments of the Speaker of the House of Commons; but the attempt was almost defeated by the too forward communications of some who were privy to the consultation.

"March 21st. Bishop of Durham's. The King to have the declaration laid before him by the Bishop of London. Bishop of Durham's early on proclamation sub-committee—Bishop of London's report. The King heard him out and turned the conversation. The Bishop of Durham tried the Speaker, but in vain."[28] "Evening to the Speaker on Sunday declaration plan; he very unreasonably angry—I deeply moved and much hurt. Staid late with him, and afterwards could not get to sleep."[29] "Interview with the Speaker, who extremely offended at the declaration, and being asked to change (the) day (of his parliamentary meetings). 'Personal insult,' &c. I told him that it was not so meant. The attempt has failed, but I hope God will accept it."[30]

He mixed too upon principle as much as he was able

[28] Diary, March 28. [29] Diary, April 17. [30] Diary, May 5.

in general society. "The Bishop of London, Mrs. Kennicott, Hatsells, Bowdler, and Lady Waldegrave dined with me—rational talk—the Bishop and Hatsell both opposing me as to times being gone off in religion. The Bishop preaching every Friday in Lent. Crowds to hear him—fine people and gentlemen standing all the time. I affirmed that there is less thought of God though more refinement."[31] "I went to Pitt's—where I supped tête-à-tête. Much political talk on O'Connor, Favey,[32] &c. arrested: on defence of country, &c. Home late."[33] "To Dundas's in the evening to meet Whitwell on internal defence,—Pitt, Duke of Buccleugh, Bathurst, Samuel Thornton, Carrington, Chancellor—after discussion went up-stairs till half past twelve, and supped. Home with Pitt and Duke." Yet he was little satisfied with the amount of his exertions. "Milner tells me that I take too little part in public business, that I speak too little upon great questions."[34] "This last week rolled away like a day, and little done I fear—always out, or people to dinner—too little time or reading. I will try an account to check and discover how it is. Last week—Letters—Lord Clare's Speech—Bible almost daily."[35] "This last week hurrying—people with us—late hours—and I fear but little done. Proclamation Society, two days. Committee on treatment of French prisoners. Beverley Drainage. Arthur Young's manu-

[31] Diary, March 3.
[32] James Quigley, otherwise James John Favey.
[33] Diary, March 10.
[34] Ib. Feb. 25.
[35] Ib. March 4.

script. Much company. Not very well."[36] "I am much disturbed between a sense of the necessity of not giving up the world, and the evil effects from my present great intercourse with it both to my heart and understanding."[37] "Many doubts about company, whether I ought not in great measure to give it up." The secret of his maintaining an untainted spirit in this full bustle of worldly distractions may be found in the motive from which alone he mixed in them, and in the habits of self-communing which he carefully maintained. The perfect rest of succeeding Sundays... "I feel the comfort of Sunday very sensibly to-day."[38] "Oh it is a blessed thing to have the Sunday devoted to God"[39]... was of great service to him here; and the full entries of his Journal are a searching review of his conduct and spirit through the week.

"This last hurrying week has kept and now leaves my soul in a sad state. How little does my heart seem to have its affections above! I doubt about giving up much of this raffled hurrying system. May God for Christ's sake guide and support me. Last week, angry from pride at Pitt and the Speaker—vain in regard to Belsham's letter. Oh what a multitude of mercies have I to be thankful for! Compare my lot with K.'s."[40]

"This last week, in which I hoped so much to be done, has gone by, and how little got through! And

[36] Diary, March 25. [37] Journal, Feb. 18.
[38] Ib. May 20. [39] Ib. Sept. 30. [40] Diary, Feb. 25.

though my affections this day are a good deal called forth, how little have I of late been under the influence of real Christian tempers! How sadly defective am I in humility! When I look into myself I find myself poor indeed compared with my highly-favoured state; but how little do I feel this habitually! How fond am I of distinction (my constitutional vice)! This would not be, if I was truly humble within, at the core. Here meditation daily, or as frequent as might be, would do much. Let me try for it. Oh may this day be of lasting service to me! and at this time, when probably war and tumult are at hand, may I serve God and fear nothing. May I boldly walk in the might of the Lord, and sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. May I grow in humility, peace, and love, in meekness, holy courage, self-denial, active exertion, and discreet zeal." "I feel a firm confidence, that if through God's grace I am enabled to keep close to him in love, fear, trust, and obedience, I shall go on well; most likely even in this life, being perhaps remarkably preserved from evil; but at all events I shall be supported under whatever may be laid upon me. These are days in which I should especially strive to grow in preparedness for changing worlds, and for whatever sharp trials I may be called to. Oh what humiliation becomes me when I think of my innumerable mercies!"[41] "I resolve to be up in time to have an hour before breakfast for serious meditation, prayer, and Scripture preparation for

[41] Journal, March 7, 11, &c.

these dangerous times; also more time for unbroken thought; half or three-quarters of an hour on parliamentary topics."[42]

"This week I have got more morning time for serious reading and reflection. I have now been taking a musing walk, and, alas, what cause do I find for humiliation! During the ensuing week if M. be with us, as it is likely, I shall be subject to several temptations as heretofore. Let me now resolve to keep earlier hours; not curtail evening prayer; turn the conversation to profitable and rational topics; be meek, and gentle, and humble, and kind. How much I owe him!"[43]

His marriage interfered far less than might have been expected with his various occupations. "The cause of my long silence," he tells his sister,[44] "has been really, as I believe, my having been more than even commonly busy. . . . How fast time and life too rolls away! It seems but a span since we were together at Hull; and more than six months have since gone over our heads. My hours have passed pleasantly; greatly indeed have I reason to be thankful for the signal blessing which Providence last year conferred upon me. My dearest wife bears my hurrying way of life with great sweetness; but it would be a sort of gaol delivery to her no less than to myself to escape from the tumult of this bustling town, and retire to the enjoyment of country scenes and country occupations. But I am well aware that it is not

[42] Journal, April 15. [43] Ib. April 22. [44] March 9.

right for me to indulge in such reveries. My business is cut out for me, and Providence has graciously blessed me with the means of being cheered under it; which means I should do wrong to pervert into a source of indolent self-enjoyment, flinching from my collar and refusing to draw my load because a little weary of being in the harness. At all times in which one feels this sense of weariness, and longs for quietness and peace, one should endeavour to make it subservient to the purpose of raising one's mind heavenward, and of establishing a practical feeling of the vanity and transitoriness of all human things, and of this life being but a passage, and our home that 'rest that remaineth for the people of God.'"

Early in the spring he again brought the Abolition question before parliament. April 3rd. "Busy preparing for Slave motion, which made. Fox, Grey, Sheridan, &c. came. Thought we had carried it—83 to 87." The debate was again long and earnest, and the West Indian opposition still fought under the cover of apparent concession. The horrors of the trade were now candidly admitted by Mr. Bryan Edwards and his followers, who contented themselves with the safer objection, that a vote of Abolition would only substitute an illicit for a legal traffic.

In this debate, the friends of Abolition were for the first time openly supported by the eloquence of Mr. Canning; and in it the vote as well as the speech of Mr. Windham first upheld the continuance of the Slave Trade. This was a part of that change, which

the recoil from French principles had gradually effected in his mind. In the debate of 1796, though his vote was with his former friends, his speech was faltering and uncertain. On the motion of Mr. Ellis in 1797, he avowed a preference for *gradual* abolition; and by April 1798, he had learned to justify his place in the majority, by which the question of immediate abolition was directly negatived.

Though defeated on the division, "on the whole," says Mr. Wilberforce, "we got ground."[45] This conviction rendered the present and succeeding year a period of the most active exertion in the cause. It was resolved to propose the immediate abolition of the trade along the northern coast of Africa. Upon the 4th of May, the measure was brought forward by Mr. Henry Thornton; but the session was found to be too far advanced, and the House too full of business, for its present consideration; and on the 18th of June it was deferred until the following session.

As the season advanced the Diary exhibits his usual amount of daily occupations, with slight notices of the most important amongst passing events.

"April 5th. Busy all morning. Muncaster, Bankes, Henry Thornton, &c. dined with me before House. House—land tax business. The Swiss destroying their officers from false suspicion of treachery. First blood spilt in Ireland. What talk about 'our proud situation,' alas!" April 15th. Sunday. "This last week, which I had hoped would be of great effect in

[45] Diary, April 3.

getting through my business, has flown away insensibly, and little done, yet working hard. Chief business—speeches on Slave Trade for Debrett and Woodfall — letters — business about defence — Jeremiah's Lamentations and Ezekiel began. More and more likelihood of French landing. Schank's discovery much vaunted, of fitting merchant ships' boats with cannon or carronades. Poor E. came to town on Wednesday—age to him setting in gloomily—how kind is Muncaster to him! Great conspiracy detected at Manchester. 21st. Dined exhibition — annual affair—about 170 present. Great set of democrats taken up, proposing to murder witnesses who are to give evidence at Maidstone. Things begin to look better in Europe. 24th. Out early to Bishop of Durham's—society—on Erskine's refusing" (to retain his brief if Williams was brought up for judgment). "House on magistrates' Bill. We refused Bankes's children's ball.

"May 5th. Dined at Lambeth—public day, with Hatsell and Lord Auckland—large party. When there, heard from Pitt about Fox's speech at the Whig club—wrote about it. Talked much with Sir William Scott, and Dr. Sturges who praised my book much. 7th. Pitt gave up any other proceedings against Fox but striking out of the Privy Council: which done. 10th. Busy all day on Slave Carrying Bill. 11th. Busy, Slave Bill consultation. 18th. House till late. Buxton's motion about property tax. It illustrates human nature. He would have with-

drawn it if fairly used. 19th. This last fortnight much parliamentary business—land tax sale Bill, ship owners' Bill, Slave Carrying Bill, and African Bill, framing—and House. Took possession of Broomfield for the first time. Too much castle building on coming here. Oh check these follies. Is it not enough Christ says, 'I come quickly?'

"21st. With Stephen and Henry Thornton about African limited Abolition. Dined late at Grant's, to meet his Scotch relation. Terribly silent. 23rd. To town: heard the issue of the trials. Quigley convicted. Strange letter from Arthur Young to Gamaliel Lloyd. Dan. Sykes says, that he knows the name of the man by whom Quigley's pocket paper was written, which he got accidentally in his way through town. Democrats speak well of Plumer's behaviour —not so of Attorney-General. Magistrates' costs misdemeanour Bill. Beat—argued well, I think. To Broomfield at night with Burgh and Muncaster. 24th. To town, but no House. Much talk about the trials. There appears amongst the democratical gentry much concert and sympathy of knowledge and feeling. I should have acquitted O'Connor on Buller's charge; but doubt on the evidence. Pitt clear about O'Connor's guilt. This week to town daily: rather wasting time in bits and broken pieces.

"27th. Whitsunday. Pleasant day, spent as Sundays should be. 28th. Ashley came in at my dressing time, and brought word of Pitt and Tierney's duel yesterday. I more shocked than almost ever. I

resolved to do something if possible. 30th. To town. Found people much alive about duel, and disposed to take it up. I gave notice [of a motion on the subject in the House of Commons]. Letter from Pitt, evening."

TO W. WILBERFORCE ESQ.

"My dear Wilberforce,

I am not the person to argue with you on a subject in which I am a good deal concerned. I hope too that I am incapable of doubting your kindness to me (however mistaken I may think it) if you let any sentiment of that sort actuate you on the present occasion. I must suppose that some such feeling has inadvertently operated upon you, because whatever may be your *general* sentiments on subjects of this nature, they can have acquired no new tone or additional argument from any thing that has passed in this transaction. You must be supposed to bring this forward in reference to the individual case.

"In doing so, you will be accessary in loading one of the parties with unfair and unmerited obloquy. With respect to the other party, myself, I feel it a real duty to say to you frankly that your motion is one for my removal. If any step on the subject is proposed in parliament and agreed to, I shall feel from that moment that I can be of more use out of office than in it; for in it, according to the feelings I entertain, I could be of none. I state to you, as I think I ought, distinctly and explicitly what I feel. I hope I

need not repeat what I always feel personally to yourself.

Yours ever,

WILLIAM PITT.

"Downing Street, Wednesday,
May 30th, 1798, 11 P. M."

"Strange length to which he carries the point of honour."[46]

The hope which had led Mr. Wilberforce, in spite of all his personal feeling, to give notice of his motion had now almost deserted him. Instead of being able to carry a strong resolution against the principle of duels, through the general feeling which had been excited by an apprehension for the safety of Mr. Pitt, he found that the fear of censuring the minister would lead many to defend the system in order to screen the man. He began therefore to doubt the wisdom of persevering in his motion. "June 1st. To town to-day and yesterday, and back in the evening. Much discussion about duel motion. Saw Pitt and others—all pressed me to give it up. Consulted Grant and Henry Thornton, and at length resolved to give it up, as not more than five or six would support me, and not more than one or two speak, and I could only have carried it so far, as for preventing *ministers* fighting duels. June 2nd. Being resolved, I wrote to Pitt to give it up."

[46] Diary, May 30.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

"My dear Pitt,

I scarcely need assure you that I have given the most serious and impartial consideration to the question, whether to persist in bringing forward my intended motion or to relinquish it. My own opinion as to the propriety of it in itself, remains unaltered. But being also convinced that it would be productive on the whole of more practical harm than practical good, and that it would probably rather impair than advance the credit of that great principle which I wish chiefly to keep in view, (I mean the duty of obeying the Supreme Being, and cultivating His favour,) I have resolved to give it up; and when thus resolved, I cannot hesitate a moment in sending you word of my determination. At the same time I shall be much obliged to you if you will not mention my resolution generally, though you may, where you may think it necessary; but for many reasons I do not wish it to be publicly known till it is heard from myself. The Speaker is the only person of our town friends, to whom I shall open myself at present.

"I am sure, my dear P. that I need not tell you that the idea of my being compelled by duty to do any thing painful or embarrassing to you has hurt me not a little; but I know you too well not to be sure that even you yourself would not wish me to be influenced by this consideration against the dictates of my con-

science. I will only hint the pain you have been the occasion of my suffering on the subject itself, which I had intended to bring into discussion. I will only say, that whatever mischiefs may hereafter flow from it, will not be imputable to me. It is my sincere prayer, my dear Pitt, that you may here be the honoured instrument of Providence for your country's good, and for the well-being of the civilized world; and much more that you may at length partake of a more solid and durable happiness and honour than this world can bestow. I am, and I trust I ever shall be,

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Broomfield, Sat. June 2, 1798."

"Received an answer from Pitt that he was greatly relieved by my relinquishment—he seriously ill."[47]

"Downing Street, Saturday, 6 P. M.

"My dear Wilberforce,

I cannot say to you how much I am relieved by your determination, which I am sincerely convinced is right on your own principles, as much as on those of persons who think differently. Much less can I tell you how sincerely I feel your cordial friendship and kindness on all occasions, as well where we differ as where we agree.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. PITT.

[47] Diary, June 2.

"I mentioned the first part of your letter to Rose, who was with me when I opened it, before I read it through, but he has promised to communicate it to nobody. I have since sent it to Dundas, to which I thought you would not object, as he was very anxious, and his return to town depended upon it.—We have excellent accounts to-day from Ireland, and (what I hope will lead to something still better) an account in the French paper of the 29th of May, that Buonaparte's expedition sailed from Toulon on the 19th, with twelve sail of the line. If we are not unfortunate, Nelson with the same number will meet him in the Mediterranean."

"Monday, June 4th. Staid away from court on account of motion impending. The King asked the Speaker if I persevered. Pitt told me the King approved of his conduct. 5th. To town. House—declared that I gave up my motion because no support." "I am sure," he wrote to Lord Muncaster,[48] "you have been full of a letter to me, as I have been teeming towards you since the last eventful Sunday, but one thing or another has perpetually intervened to prevent your hearing from me: I will send you a word or two, to spare you the anxiety which you might be otherwise likely to feel on my account from the idea of to-morrow's discussion. I wave my motion for reasons which I am sure you would think good.

[49] June 4.

"I must say that this late incident more illustrates the character and exposes the selfishness of the system of modern honour, than any transaction that ever happened. Tarleton has told me he tried to prevail on Tierney to forbear, but in vain; and I have some reason to believe that there was a good deal of talk about it amongst the party before the meeting took place. It is reported also with an appearance of truth, that the Speaker knew of it on Saturday. Were you in the House the whole time? I think we came in together when Tierney was calling on the Speaker for protection. I will only add, I was never so much shocked as when Ashley brought me down the news on Monday morning."

"What cause have I for humiliation," are his secret reflections on Sunday the 27th, "in my temper in the House of Commons on Friday evening, when Pitt greatly provoked me, by intervening between me and Lushington, and putting off the Slave Carrying Bill. Alas, love how cold in me! I was near resenting it upon the spot. I now am thankful that I did not. O God, how full of mercies hast Thou been to me!" "How little" (he continues, Sunday, June 17th) "did I think that Pitt's conduct, which, poor fellow, made him mortify me, would draw him, as it did, into the scrape which produced his duel, which took place on the very day (of my former entry) at three o'clock. How thankful for Christianity to soothe my angry spirit! and with what pleasure did I look back during

that Sunday on my conduct in making it up with him without show on that same day!"[49]

Friday, "June 8th. To town. Sad accounts from Ireland. French Toulon fleet out with Buonaparte. I have become an honorary member of St. Margaret's corps, with Bankes, Belgrave, &c. 10th. Taken ill, and for four or five days very threatening. Persuaded not to go to town on St. John's motion about O'Connor. 14th. To town. Sheridan's motion on Ireland. I full of thoughts, but not having pondered on the subject feared I had not reflected enough to speak. 16th. Letter to Sir Christopher Sykes on his rejoinder to my refusal to ask Pitt for a living for his son—explained to him frankly and fully."

TO SIR CHRISTOPHER SYKES, BART. SLEDMERE, YORKSHIRE.

"Broomfield near London, June 10, 1798.

"My dear Sir Christopher,

Amidst the various feelings which your last letter excited, there were none, I can truly assure you, which were not of a friendly quality, and I was highly gratified by the frankness and candour with which you opened your mind to me. I did not receive it till late the day before yesterday, on my arrival in town for the House, and yesterday I was so much occupied as to be absolutely prevented from writing to you. This morning, (though my having had several

[49] Journal.

inmates and visitors at our new residence, near Clapham Common, has swallowed up my time,) I prefer scribbling you a hasty reply to suffering you to wait for my answer till I have a little leisure.

"The subject on which I shall have to give you my sentiments is one on which, whatever I write, though put down on paper in a hurry, will be the result of deliberate reflection. I can have no objection, my dear Sir Christopher, to treat you with the same frankness you have used towards me, and to state to you the principles on which I think it right to regulate my conduct in the case of all ecclesiastical preferments. What you say of the minister and Chancellor being, in their capacity of patrons, trustees for the public, is a very just remark, and shows that you have thought over the subject so as to have fixed principles on it. But there is another consideration to which, though I am sure it must have been in your mind, you have not so much adverted in your letter, and this therefore I will state as briefly as I am able.

"As the influence any man possesses, and his opportunities of usefulness, are all so many trusts for the employment of which he will hereafter have to give account, so there are no opportunities of usefulness which are trusts from their very nature more weighty and important than the power of recommending to any ecclesiastical preferment which has the care of souls. To speak seriously, and otherwise I can scarcely do justice to the argument, the number of the individuals who may be rescued from eternal

misery and brought to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, and the degree of the eternal happiness even of the happy, must, humanly speaking, depend on the minister set over the parish to which they belong. Therefore, I am bound to remember, in the disposal of any living, (whether by my own presenting to it directly, or by using my influence with the patron,) that the interest the parishioners have in the nomination is that of as many persons as the parish consists of, and is of an everlasting, infinite value; that which the clergyman to be presented to it has in it is the temporal interest of one individual. It follows of course, that I must attend to the two following principles in my recommendations to church preferment. 1st, That of naming the man whom in my conscience I believe, on the whole, likely to do most good in the station to be filled; and 2ndly, That of endeavouring to employ my influence, so as that any given measure of it may be productive of the utmost possible benefit. This will require me, in looking out for pieces of preferment about which to interest myself, to advert to the size of the parish and its circumstances, to the number and situation of the flock, rather than to the value of the pasture; thus endeavouring to place the most useful man I can find in the most extensive sphere of usefulness.

"But I must be still more particular in order to give you any adequate notion of my sentiments. It is my fixed opinion, formed on much reading, consideration, and experience, that there has been for

many years among the majority of our clergy a fatal and melancholy departure from the true principles of Christianity, and of the Church of England; from those principles which prevail throughout her Articles, her Liturgy, the writings of her venerable martyrs, and of many of her brightest ornaments. I am not speaking of speculative matter; this declension, or, if I would give it its true name, this heresy, is important, because its practical effects are in the highest degree mischievous. I have stated this in my late publication as clearly and as strongly as I could. The inference from it is obvious. In selecting a minister for any living it is not enough to know that he is diligent and exemplary in his conduct, nor yet that his talents, knowledge, and manner of officiating are every thing that one could wish, but I must ask, what are his doctrines?

"I have said enough to put you in possession of my principles, and I hope I can add that I have acted on them uniformly and without deviation for many years. In the case of those who have been nearest and dearest to me, I have adhered to them. I will only appeal in this view to the instance of Dr. Clarke, whose very laborious living produced him but about £250 per annum. The place was highly unpleasant (comparatively speaking) to him, and still more to my sister. But being convinced that he was on many accounts better fitted to do good at Hull than most other men would be, or than he would be in almost any other place, I made no effort for fixing

him in any situation more eligible as to temporals; though I will frankly tell you that I had the deanery of York in view for him in case he had lived, as being that for which he was eminently qualified.

"The account I have received of your son from a friend to whom he is pretty well known, is in many particulars highly creditable to him, and such as to allow me not to give up the hope (a hope which I contemplate with real satisfaction) of some time or other being instrumental in his preferment. I shall be very glad to become acquainted with him. I need scarcely say that it was a painful effort to me to write to you the answer I did, and I am sure I should commence my acquaintance with him with a bias in his favour, both from his general character and my good will towards you and your family.

"There is much more in my mind, but I have not time to put it on paper, and what is more material is already said."

It was only upon general grounds that he now asked any such favours at the hands of government. "When I was a young man," he told a friend who had requested his good offices in favour of a client, "I own I was often sanguine in my hopes of obtaining situations under government for persons, whom, for their own sakes or that of their connexions, I wished to serve. But a longer acquaintance with life damped these expectations, and taught me, though slowly, that a man who would act on my principles and go on

my plan, must not expect to be successful in this competition. Such things are only to be got by an earnestness and importunity very unbecoming my situation."

"June 16th. The Toulon scheme supposed for the West Indies. Buonaparte rivals Alexander the Great. I think he wishes to get off the English invasion. Poor Burgh almost heart-broken about Ireland. Popery not hinted at as one of the causes of Irish barbarism. Lord Cornwallis is going. Had rather go to India. 22nd. House on Lord G. Cavendish's motion about Ireland—spoke shortly. Sheridan's taunt about my conscience, while he himself convicted of a misstatement. Fox, Grey, &c. there. Fox about Slave Trade. House very late—home near five o'clock. 23rd. Dined Bishop of London's—much talk about Ireland. 28th. Rebel camp at Wexford stormed, all apparently suppressed. Pitt well again. Reported that he insane; that wounded in the duel; that going into the House of Lords; that disgusted with something that passed in House of Commons."

CHAPTER XV.

JUNE 1798 TO SEPTEMBER 1799.

Settlement at Broomfield—His mother's death—Letter to Hannah More—His charities—Christian Observer—Letters to William Hey—Protection of Jersey Methodists—Parliament meets—Mr. Pitt's designs—Cold Bath Fields' prison—Debates on the Union—Motion for Abolition again defeated—Slave Trade Limitation Bill—Lost in Upper House—Sunday newspapers—Weakness of his health.

PARLIAMENT was prorogued upon the 29th of June, and Mr. Wilberforce immediately established himself at Broomfield for the summer. "My situation here," he says, "though so comfortable, will require much watchfulness, and plan, and circumspection, or my time will be frittered away, my usefulness abridged, and my soul unspiritualized. I will consider well how to turn it to the best account, and form my plan deliberately, with prayer for wisdom and for strength to keep my resolutions. My wife's health absolutely requires a villa. A plan of study and an arrangement of time to be formed, and the business of the recess to be chalked out. Oh what cause have I for shame, comparing myself with my advantages and

mercies."[1] "To try this recess at six hours between breakfast and dinner, and two hours before breakfast for thought and real business."[2] "Surely," he writes during a sharp attack of illness with which Mrs. Wilberforce was visited, "God is punishing me for a feeling of exultation. 'I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Thou, Lord, of Thy goodness hast made my hill so strong. Thou didst turn away Thy face, and I was troubled.' How uncertain are all human things! I hope I feel some Christian resignation, and holy reliance on the mercy and goodness of God and my Saviour."[3]

While he was here engaged with "books, letters, a little dictating, and many friends,"[4] he received an account of the illness, and by the next post of the death, of his aged mother. Unwillingly leaving Mrs. Wilberforce, who was on the eve of her first confinement, he set off immediately for Hull, to attend his mother's funeral. "You will join with me," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce from Stamford[5] on his return to Broomfield, "in thanking God for His goodness in having thus far protected me on my way. I got to Barton waterside about a quarter to twelve yesterday, and after a remarkably fine passage I was in the old house by one o'clock. This morning, at six o'clock, I set out, with (in spite of all remonstrances) some little pomp, in the funeral procession to Beverley, and the last solemn service being ended, I

[1] Journal. [2] Ib. June 24. [3] Ib.
[4] Diary. [5] July 7.

returned to Hessle, and was again at Barton by eleven; and now here I am only eighty-nine miles from London, and hoping to be with you on Monday evening. I shall of course stay here all to-morrow; and though, not having heard from you, some thoughts and wishes about you will steal in, I have a pleasure in the idea of halting, and spending a quiet day in blessing and praising that gracious Being, who to me has been rich in mercy, and abundant in loving-kindness. Oh that I were more warmly thankful and more zealously active!

"My dear mother did not suffer in death, and I trust she is happy. The change gradually produced in her during the last eight years was highly gratifying to all who loved her, and looked forward. It was a solemn and an affecting scene to me, yesterday evening, to be in my mother's room, and see the bed where I was born, and where my father and my mother died, and where she then lay in her coffin. I was alone, and I need not say to you, or seek to conceal from you, I put up my prayers that the scene might work its due effect. It is late, and I must retire." "Had a delightful contemplative evening walk in Burleigh park. I have felt this day, I hope, in some degree rightly disposed; but oh let me not confound occasional feelings with being a true Christian. And yet, O Lord, I would resolutely endeavour to walk worthy of my high and holy calling. O enlighten my ignorance, purify my corruptions, warm my coldness, and fix my volatility. Oh may my mother's death impress me!

May I crucify the flesh. What manifold mercies have I received. God has remarkably prospered me on my way; He seems to give me present encouragement for obeying Him. This seems a sad careless place, alas! I talked to several common people. Found the butchers' shops open. At church, miserable work. Remnant of Sunday school only eight children, and no more in the place. I have seldom seen a more apparently irreligious place. A shopkeeper said, none of the clergy active, or went amongst the poor. One Presbyterian meeting."[6]

"Monday, up early, and travelled on as fast as I could; got to Broomfield by nine o'clock, safely, I thank God, and found all well." "My dear wife," he notes a few days later, "is now ill. How dependent does this make me feel upon the power and goodness of God! What a humbling impression have I of my own inability; that all my happiness, and all that belongs to me, is at the disposal of the Supreme Being! So it ought always to be. This is 'to walk softly.' I see as usual the kind hand of a gracious God, disposing little incidents with a favouring kindness. Whatever may be God's will now, may I submit with humble, acquiescing confidence. I have been far too little careful to improve the opportunities of usefulness afforded by my situation in married life. May I be enabled to do better; and if God should give me an offspring, may I bring it up in His faith, and fear, and love, as a Christian should be educated to go through

[6] Diary and Journal, July 8.

such a world as this."[7] "Oh what abundant cause have I for gratitude," he says the following week: "how well all has gone on, both with mother and child! I will take a musing walk of gratitude and intercession. How full of mercies is God to me, and how void am I of gratitude! How little desirous of diffusing the happiness so freely given to me! Oh may I still feel more the weight of my burthen, charging it on myself and pressing it home; placing myself in Christ's sight, in that of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect. O Lord, renew me; let this corruption put on incorruption, even here in heart, and bring forth the graces of the Spirit."[8]

At Broomfield he was within reach of his London business, and was surrounded by his friends. "July 11th. Burgh came to dinner—Henry Thornton—after it rational conversation. 12th. Malta taken, and no other news of Buonaparte. La Fayette talking of assisting the oppressed people of Ireland. Thornton and Grant to evening council, about Sierra Leone. 16th. After breakfast to Auckland's, and then on to Pitt at Holwood. Tête-à-tête with Pitt and much political talk. He much better—improved in habits also—beautifying his place with great taste—marks of ingenuousness and integrity. Resenting and spurning the bigoted fury of Irish Protestants."[9] Soon after this visit he wrote to Lord Muncaster.

[7] Journal, July 21. [8] Ib. July 29, and Aug. 5. [9] Diary.

" My dear Muncaster,

I am sure you and Lady Muncaster will be kindly solicitous to know how our nursery goes on. I thank God, my dear wife and our little boy have uniformly been as well as possible. . . . I know your friendly heart is gratified by my thus annihilating the distance between us, and bringing you within view of me in my new relations.

" You ask me concerning the report [10] about Pitt. Altogether without foundation, is my answer. But our oppositionists either know human nature well, or they pursue instinctively the means adapted to produce their malevolent end. Report and calumniate confidently and diligently: no matter if the report be proved false, and the calumny be once formally, distinctly, and authoritatively rebutted on its authors: go on reporting the same tale, more confidently and more diligently. It will gradually sink into the minds of men, and there leave a *depositum* which will permanently tincture them; and if, from our friends foolishly neglecting these rumours when first propagated, they are suffered to diffuse themselves without contradiction, as if too foolish to be believed, (but the folly is ours, nothing it too foolish to be believed,) then the business may be done in less time, and the story will soon gain credit. There is no ground whatever for the rumour concerning Pitt. Yet the opposition papers go on with it.

[10] Vid. page 292.

I spent a day with him lately, tête-à-tête, and not to say that the particular story I have been alluding to was disproved, he appeared better than he has been all the winter, and his *habits* much more wholesome. I must say farewell. Kind remembrances to Lady Muncaster and your daughters.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"July 18th. Montagu came with his family—discussed affairs with him, he truly pleasing and philosophical. Evening, Carrington, very kindly, about my accounts; he made me out richer than I conceived." This discovery was soon conveyed in a characteristic mode to Mrs. Hannah More.

"My dear Madam,

The letter you wrote to Mrs. Henry Thornton, concerning your Mongewell intercourse, has made a deep impression on me; and though no one can prize more highly than myself your services in Somersetshire, yet I believe it would be right for you to pay a visit to the Prince Bishop, at Auckland.[11] Henry Thornton and I agree in our judgment, that you cannot decline this new sphere of usefulness. Do you remember the idea of a great man, (I think Huygens,) that there might be stars, of which the light, though always on its journey, had not yet travelled down to

[11] Mrs. Hannah More had been invited to assist the Bishop in his benevolent design of establishing schools in his diocese.

us. It is somewhat like this with the light of the blessed gospel, to too many districts in this very country. I wish you to consider this as an opportunity of conveying it into a dark corner of the island. Go then to Auckland, and may the grace of God go with you. I am convinced that, on many accounts, you would be able to do far more than myself, or any other person living, with this primary planet, which is surrounded with satellites. It is more, it is a very sun, the centre of an entire system. I will with all my heart meet you there if possible. The Bishop has often invited me and Mrs. W.

"But I am pressed for time, and have one point more on which I must detain you, I mean the extreme importance of your husbanding your strength. I have looked into the state of my finances, and am in good case in what respects this world. I can appropriate as large a sum as may be requisite for your operations. I am clear you ought to purchase ease, which is with you the power of continuing your exertions, though at a dear rate, by allowing yourself the accommodation of a carriage. Surely we know each other well enough to communicate on this or any other subject without embarrassment or reserve. You ought to permit the friends of your institutions to assist you with money to any extent which may be requisite for carrying them on. What signifies it in what shape and for what purpose the money is to be applied? In the composition and resolution of forces it all produces an effect in the required direction. It is really absurd that we who

affect to be deeply interested for the maintenance of the system, should not give it the only support which our situation renders us able to afford. Each partner should supply that in which he most abounds: the monied, money; you and your sisters, what is far more valuable, and what no money can procure. Now do *act* if you are convinced." . . . "I love and admire the zeal of your young clergy. Indeed it refreshes and revives me when sickened by the shabby topics and shabby people, great and small, with whom I am of necessity too conversant, to turn my eyes to you and your little Christian communion of saints.[12]

Believe me ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"I have talked with Henry Thornton," he writes again, "concerning the Somersetshire operations, and we have agreed that £400 per annum should be allotted by us to that service. Mrs. Bouverie's money in Henry Thornton's hands is to furnish £200, and he and I £100 each..... I need not say any thing in addition to what I have before expressed of my earnest *impetration* that you would bear in m ind that your best contribution a thousand times over is of trouble, time, and personal exertions, and your great object should be how you can furnish these in the most abundant measure and the longest continuance. If by giving £200 or £300 of your own you abridge your personal contributions for one year, the operations

[12] Letters of July 11 and 19.

would be a loser by the bargain, to say nothing of the pain you make us all feel by not calling on us freely for such pecuniary supplies as may be wanting. You are the main-spring of the machine; and it is your business to keep that in order, ours to supply subordinate *movements* (I did not mean a pun but a post-chaise now occurs as one of them). Do not think me tedious in reverting so often to this well-worn remonstrance. When I was with you I saw it was still needed; and I am like the man who preached for thirty years together against drunkenness, because his parish still continued the vice." [13]

"Never distress yourself, my dear Mary," he wrote[14] this summer to another correspondent, "on the ground of my being put to expense on account of yourself, or your near relatives; you give what is far more valuable than money—time, thought, serious, active, affectionate, persevering attention; and as it has pleased God of His good providence to bless me with affluence, and to give me the power, and I hope the heart, to assist those who are less gifted with the good things of this life, how can I employ them more properly than on near relations, and when I strengthen your hands, who are always endeavouring to serve their best interest. You may say to ——, that on your account, I am willing to take the charge of Charles's education for two or three years."

The sums which, as "a good steward," he thus dispensed to those who needed, formed a large portion of

[13] Dec. 10. [14] Aug. 24.

his annual income. As a young man, he had been charitable from the natural impulses of a generous spirit. By an account book, which has escaped destruction, he appears to have expended in the year 1783, between five and six hundred pounds in this way. There are in it many such entries as, "Sent to the Rev. Mr. Emeson of Keswick, a most excellent man with a large family, and mean to do so annually, a bank note, £20." But his conduct was no sooner regulated by higher principles than he determined to allot a fixed proportion of his income (obtained often by personal self-denial in small things) to works of charity. Before his marriage, at least one-fourth of it was so employed; and in this year the record still remaining (and it is incomplete) accounts for more than £2000. Some of the particular entries show the hidden channels in which his bounty flowed, cheering many hearts who never knew their benefactor. Besides regular almoners for the distribution of small sums, to one of whom in the course of this year he intrusted above a hundred pounds, he was in the habit of relieving through many others the distress which came under their observation. This he did especially in the case of active clergymen, in whose hands he often placed an annual sum of considerable amount for parochial distribution. Four of those which occur this year, and are marked annual expenses, are for sums of £25, £26, £30, and £40, respectively. Great zeal in their vocation constituted of itself a claim on his assistance, even in districts for

which he had no local interest. "Mr. Charles's schools in Wales, annually £21."

Some of these entries are highly characteristic. "Expenses of Mr. Atkinson's act for Leeds church £100." "Lent Robert Wells £13, which never expect again—he has a wife and six children to maintain, and ekes out a scanty income by a trade in old clothes." "Sent Dr. Chapman five guineas for a book which not read, and impertinently sent me; but Irving says he is a worthy man, and he must be distressed to act in this manner." "Sent Captain S. five guineas (a gentleman in distress sometimes most of all so)." "Sent him ten pounds in addition, which he said would render him completely comfortable." "C., only justified by my having advised him originally to enter the law, £50." "Captain Pearce £5 5*s*. He is but a moderate hand I fear, but in urgent want." "Lent M. £100, not very willingly, because though I sincerely wish to serve him, I think this plan of paying off all his debts will not make him economize. It is Mr. Pitt's plan." "In compliance with my rule I must put it down *given*, but if he lives I shall receive again from Captain Hall,[15] £100." "Given W. C. £55 on a solemn promise that he will never again issue a bill, and not borrow of any one without previously informing me. He is not economical, but has a claim on me from having lived in my service, and imprudence must be pardoned. He is sure that from his salary he can gradually repay me, but I cannot believe it." "Given W.

[15] Vid. vol. i. p. 355.

C. £63 to enable him to refund what he has taken of the Board's money. I do it only because it would be ruin to him to withhold it. I doubt if even under these circumstances quite right. I have solemnly assured him it should be the last time of my assisting him, and have given him parting advice. He has treated me ill in applying only £21 of the last £70 I gave him to this purpose. As I have told him plainly, I fear he cannot be saved from ruin. I have had much anxiety and vexation from him, and my only comfort is that I treat him like a Christian, he me as a man of the world. He dislikes me, and feels no gratitude to me I know for what I have done. (Private; put down as a record of my judgment and feelings.)" "For Foulay Expedition, £50." "Rev. Mr. Scott, half a year of his son's College allowance, £15." "Paid Williams's bill for expenses of Dowlin[16] and Devereux's trial, £200." "Remainder of Williams's bill unfairly coming upon me, £500." "For St. Anne's School annually £31 10*s.* 0*d.*"

Almost every charitable institution of the metropolis, of Yorkshire, and of many other parts, (extending in some instances to Edinburgh,) is included in his list of annual subscriptions. He had also regular annuitants. Not a few who afterwards acquired independence and wealth were indebted to his support for carrying them through their early struggles. Two who rose to the judicial bench are this year mentioned as receiving from him £300.

[16] The witnesses against Kimber, vid. vol. i. p. 357.

Besides his contribution to the Elland Society, he supported readily young men of promise in their education for Holy Orders; and through every year of its protracted continuance he drew largely from his own resources for the expenses of the Abolition contest.

It was especially his habit to relieve those who in the higher walks of life were reduced to unexpected indigence. Many letters acknowledging such aid, and tracing to it oftentimes escape from ruin, appear in his correspondence. One such instance has been furnished by his secretary. "'Mr. Ashley,' he once said to me, 'I have an application from an officer of the navy who is imprisoned for debt. I do not like to send Burgess' (his almoner) 'to him, and I have not time to go myself; would you inquire into the circumstances?' That very day I went, and found an officer in gaol for £80. He had a family dependent on him with no prospect of paying his debt; and as a last hope, at the governor's suggestion, had made this application." Mr. Wilberforce was well known among the London prisons, where, with the Rev. John Unwin, he had of old often visited and relieved the debtors. "The officer," continues Mr. Ashley, "had referred him to Sir Sidney Smith, to whom he wrote immediately. I was in the room when Sir Sidney called on the following morning. 'I know the poor man well,' he said, 'we were opposed to one another on the Baltic, he in the Russian, I in the Swedish service; he is a brave fellow, and I would

do any thing I could for him; but you know, Wilberforce, we officers are pinched sometimes, and my charity purse is not very full.' 'Leave that to me, Sir Sidney,' was his answer. Mr. Wilberforce paid his debt, fitted him out, and got him a command.—He met an enemy's ship, captured her, was promoted; and within a year I saw him coming to call in Palace Yard in the uniform of a post captain."

He continued engaged in his usual pursuits and surrounded by his friends until the beginning of September. "July 29th. Venn on 'rich and poor meet together'—good. People about to build a new chapel because he 'does not preach the gospel.' He much disturbed. Much talk with Milner about his preaching, and the growing faults of the young clergy. He conceives them getting into a rational way of preaching." "Aug. 21st. Our christening in the afternoon. News of Buonaparte's arrival in Alexandria. Sunday, Sept. 2nd. How excellent a sermon has Venn been preaching upon Luke xiv. 28—counting the cost if we profess to be Christians. It affected my heart—it humbled me in the dust. My days pass away in hurry, yet I do not think it right to go upon the retired plan. Oh may I wait on God diligently! He will then level hills and fill up plains before me. Sept. 5th. To town, to see Pitt—no news. Saw his Finance plan. They do not believe Buonaparte to be at Alexandria. Emperor of Russia coming forward, and Prussia neutral. Austria must quarrel with France. Bad news from Nelson. Lord Elgin called

yesterday. 7th. Report that 30,000 French landed in Ireland. 14th. French landed in Ireland surrendered at discretion. 22nd. Buonaparte's reaching Alexandria confirmed."

He was much occupied at this time with a plan for setting up a periodical religious publication which should admit "a moderate degree of political and common intelligence."[17] "Mr. Babington and I went this morning to Mr. Henry Thornton's to breakfast, to talk over the matter of the Magazine and its editor. We concur in opinion that a small committee, perhaps not more than three, would form the best editor. Mr. Scott is a man of whose strength of understanding, correctness of religious views, integrity, disinterestedness, diligence, and perseverance, I think very highly; he is systematically opposing the vices, both speculative and practical, of the religious world; and they are many and great, and likely to be attended with numerous and important mischiefs. But Mr. Scott is a *rough* diamond, and almost incapable of polish from his time of life and natural temper; he has not general knowledge nor taste sufficient for such an office as you would commit to him. We have *anatomized* several other subjects, but I have not time to detail to you the result of our dissection."[18] "I highly approve of a suggestion thrown out by Mr. Pearson, that the appointment or removal of an editor should be vested in a society composed of country and town ministers. The considerations

[17] Letter to W. Hey Esq. Nov. 19. [18] Ib. July 28

which recommend this to me, will of themselves occur to your mind. I will only suggest to you the different character of serious religion in the country, and in town,—in the former more solid, and in the latter more showy and talkative; the different character of the clergy too in the town and in the country, which is related to the former difference both as cause and effect. I am sorry to say that the actual state of London, and I might add the mode of preaching adopted by some who, wishing to avoid the prevailing abuses, run into another extreme, strongly enforce the argument which might at all times be urged on general principles for such a combination." [19]

After much consideration and discussion, the first number of the Christian Observer was published in January, 1801. Several of its early articles were from the pen of Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton.

Other schemes of extensive usefulness now occupied his thoughts. "I am pressed for time," he writes,[20] "but am unwilling to lay down my pen without mentioning a project of my own, which is quite in embryo; but I shall be glad for you to give it admission, and let it lie hatching in your cerebellum. It is that a school, under the management and superintendence of the clergy, should be opened in every parish or small district for the religious instruction of such as choose to send their children. They (I mean our great men) who are not on any higher grounds im-

[19] To William Hey Esq. Sept. 19. [20] Ib. Aug. 28.

pressed with a sense of the value of religious instruction, may perhaps be induced to support the system from considerations of a political nature.

"While a nation preserves a general reverence for the opinions and institutions of its forefathers, even though the bulk of the people are not under any deep impressions of piety, the rising generation is always educated with a prejudice in favour of the religion of the country, and with a disposition to befriend and maintain it. Then it may be thought the state may leave it to the people in general to bring up their own children as they will. But now, when I fear infidelity has made such deep inroads into our middle classes, and when the nature of our constitution, in addition to the levelling doctrines of our day, speedily diffuses throughout the whole community the sentiments and habits of the higher orders; I fear, if we leave it to the lower orders in general to educate their own children, they will receive little or no education at all—little prepossession in favour of Christianity, or disposition to stand up for it; and when these no longer exist, the vantage ground of our clergy is taken away from them. I have been scribbling amidst incessant interruptions, and much conversation in which I have been compelled to join. I must now bid you farewell, assuring you of my constant friendly remembrance."

Early in September he left Broomfield, to join the family of Mrs. Wilberforce, in Warwickshire, whence he wrote again to the same correspondent.

"September 18.

"My dear Sir,

When I left the neighbourhood of London, ten days ago, it was held to be next to impossible that a rupture should not take place between the French and Austrians. The Emperor of Russia also appears to be coming forward in force. I scarce know whether to wish this or not, so many different aspects does the same event present. . . . I will mention to you in confidence, that government contemplates repealing the Assessed Taxes Act, and substituting a universal impost on all income. I hope the public spirit of the commercial world will bear this provision; and I throw out to you that such a scheme is projected, because I wish you both to give me your own opinions, and also to smooth the way as much as you can for the passage of a measure in itself so rough and obnoxious. You remember that my West Riding friends expressed themselves in the spring very desirous that some such system should be adopted. Besides all other recommendations, it appears to me to have this, that people will not injure the public revenue, but the contrary, by economizing in their personal expenses, in order to enable themselves to pay their required proportion.

"If you have not read the Irish Reports and Appendixes, I recommend them to your perusal. They really beat down all opposition. Alas, alas! what a

world is this, and what cause do we find daily for acknowledging that it is sin which makes men wild beasts to each other; whereas, the gospel would unite them in the bonds of love. Farewell, my dear sir, may God bless you and yours.

I am,

Ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

After spending a fortnight in Warwickshire, and paying a hasty visit at Yoxall Lodge, he got by "Oct. 3rd, to Bath, through beautiful Rodborough vale; where rejoicings for Nelson's glorious victory; news of which first met us in detail there." "It is remarkable," he writes to Lord Muncaster,[21] "that on the very same day which brought your letter expressing your confidence in the issue of any naval engagement under Nelson's auspices, the intelligence arrived of his most glorious action; the most signal victory[22] with which a gracious Providence ever blessed our arms. The piety and naiveté of his letter would delight you, I am persuaded, as it does us." "Are not you almost as much delighted with Nelson's letter as with the victory itself. It is the most signal success with which Providence ever crowned our naval efforts."[23]

At Bath, finding "the waters agree well," he re-

[21] Oct. 5. [22] The battle of the Nile, Aug. 1.
[23] To Mrs. Hannah More, Oct. 4.

mained above a month, "much in society," and engaged in reading "Locke with my wife and sister, Coxe's Walpole, Montesquieu, Roman History, Wakefield's Life, Bible, and much time in letters." Oct. 18th. "To-day the news arrived of the defeat of the French fleetling by Sir J. Warren. Sir George Beaumont, Creykes, &c. with us. Jay told his origin and story very simply:—a bricklayer employed on Beckford's house—began to preach at 16—humble and not democratical. Cecil at Bath, and dined with us. 19th. Mayor's dinner—three hundred people—sat between Sir Sidney Smith and Fraser. Heard Sir Sidney's story—how got off from confinement, burnt ships at Toulon, and managed in Swedish fleet. 20th. To Cowslip Green—all kind and hospitable. Report of Warren's victory. 22nd. To Bath. Laurelled mail coach brought certain news of Warren's victory over fleet invading Ireland—La Hoche, and eight large frigates." The next day he wrote to Charles Grant Esq.

"Bath, October 23, 1798.

"My dear Friend,

I felt most sensibly the kindness of your letter respecting Lord Nelson's victory, though I have been remiss in not sooner returning you my hearty thanks for it. These I beg you now to accept. We have reason once more to praise the name of our gracious and almighty Guardian.

You will understand my meaning, when I say that so much success makes me almost tremble.

"I have written to Lord Teignmouth to congratulate him on his safe arrival in England, and not knowing where he is I will enclose my letter, begging you to forward it. I wish he may settle in our neighbourhood, though I have scarcely thought myself warranted in throwing out the idea to himself.

"Your family I hope are all well. We are much as usual. We have availed ourselves of our vicinity to Cowslip Green, to get over to our friends there for two or three days, and have found the settlement which we visited in the most improving state. The degree in which it has pleased God to bless the labours of these extraordinary women, is indeed wonderful. We left Mrs. Hannah More in her usual Monday's state yesterday morning, and have prevailed on her to come over to us, and take a course of the waters. It would be difficult to find any one who labours so diligently, under circumstances in which I fear I should give up the struggle, and fall back into my easy chair.

"I have much to say to you, but I have many letters to write, and there is no place in which I find my time more broken in upon. Mrs. W. desires to be affectionately remembered to yourself and all your house, and so I am sure would Mrs. Clarke, if she knew I was writing to you. I often think of you, and

I need not, I hope, assure you, that it is always with interest and affection.

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Your faithful friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He remained at Bath about a fortnight longer. "Oct. 26th. Burgh came to us from Bristol Hot-wells—strongly against the Union—'only to be done by force.' Pitt busy about the Irish Union. Nov. 6th. Lady St. John and David Hartley dined with us. Rational talk. David quite bitten with the new philosophy at 68 or 69; thinking our times worse than any former, not in science only, but moral conduct. Thinks the last was occasioned by the ambition of kings—'Little men now know their own strength,' &c. 7th. Resolved to go to town directly for Methodists' sake."[24]

It was the natural consequence of his public character, that those who were in any difficulty, especially if it was connected with religion, applied at once to him as the redresser of their wrongs. The Sunday drilling which had just been introduced into the Channel Islands, was most offensive to the religious principles of the Wesleyan Methodists; and their refusal to conform to the appointment of the local government subjected them in many instances to fine and imprisonment. They appealed to Mr. Wilberforce, and whilst still at Broomfield he had seen Mr. Dundas

[24] Journal.

upon the subject, and procured the promise of his interference in their cause. He now heard from Dr. Coke, that not only were these oppressive measures still maintained, but that on the 18th of October at the states meeting of the Isle of Jersey, it was determined to proceed to banishment against those who refused to perform this military duty. To appeal against this Bill he moved hastily to London; and having reached Broomfield on the 10th of November "went on the 13th to town on the Methodists' business;" but found that "neither Pitt nor Dundas were come."[25] Within a few days he convinced Mr. Dundas of the injustice of such a needless violation of the rights of conscience, and after some delay succeeded in getting "the Jersey Methodists' cause decided in their favour—Banishment Bill assent refused."[26]

On the 14th of December, "supped," he says, "with Pitt tête-à-tête; whom and Lord Camden (the first time since Ireland) I saw for a quarter of an hour in the morning. Much talk about Europe, Ireland, income tax, Lord Cornwallis, Union."[27] He wrote after the morning's interview to Mr. Bankes.

"My dear Bankes,

I have just seen Pitt for a few minutes, and am to have a longer talk with him perhaps this evening. He is of course in high spirits, and what is better, his health, which had seemed to be again de-

[25] Diary, Nov. 13. [26] Ib. Dec. 8. [27] Ib.

clining a few weeks ago, is now, I am assured, more radically improved than one could almost have hoped. What I have learned from him as to the state of Europe is, only a little more in detail, the general opinion we must form of it from what is known to all the world. I did not break ground on the Irish question, on which I shall be very glad to confer with you. Lord Camden came in while I was with Pitt with a large party of Hibernians, who are to dine with him to-day.

"I have at length got through the first volume of Coxe, the only one I carried about with me; and I must say I think you have formed too favourable a judgment both of the matter and of the execution of the work; though I quite agree with you in esteeming it as a valuable one for want of a better, on account of the events it treats of. But my grand quarrel with the man is, that he writes like one of those knavish coxcomb parsons, (I have known several of this stamp,) who are so afraid of being thought tinctured with professional prejudices, or of carrying into their political speculations any of their religious persuasions, that they suppose all statesmen to be a race of beings more devoid of common integrity than they really are; and defend measures, and reason on principles, which would be disclaimed by them as altogether unjustifiable. I am glad to say that I think the work warrants the persuasion that the general standard of moral practice is higher than it was fifty or sixty years ago. Much of this I conceive is owing to the

House of Commons. However I did not design to get into this long discussion this morning. I may as well reserve the rest of my animadversions. Farewell.

Believe me ever, my dear Bankes,
very sincerely yours,
W. WILBERFORCE."

Parliament met upon the 20th of November. "I hear," he writes the day preceding, "that all the opposition but Mr. Fox mean to attend to-morrow. It requires more than common power of front for all who were at Maidstone, to hold up the head without blushing. Mr. Pitt, I may say to you, is extremely favourable to the idea of a union with Ireland. Though listening myself to the proposal with complacency, I see many and great difficulties in the way. Imprimis, let me ask you, and when you write, answer my question, would you admit papists into the parliament of the empire?

"Let me also request your first thoughts on another subject which I touch upon in confidence, that of making an arrangement for the tithes similar to that which has been effected in the instance of the land tax . . . every incumbent receiving considerably more annually than his present income, and the residue constituting a fund of which part might be reserved for the purpose of compensating any diminution of the value of money, and the remainder applied to increasing small livings, or some other ecclesiastical object. I almost tremble at the

idea of changing the mode of supporting the clergy, at least of making them depend on the dividends of public funds for their stipend.

"I am scribbling amidst interruption and must conclude; yet not without one word of humble acknowledgment of the goodness of God in our late naval successes. I think Lord Nelson's letter has produced a disposition to speak more of Providence. May it have the effect of helping to awaken to recollection a people loaded with blessings. I am meditating a visit to the Archbishop to press again the proposition you recommended, of authorizing the building of chapels of ease to fall in to the mother church after a term of years. The increase of dissenting chapels, wherever the dissenters have entered on the execution of their plan of village preaching, is beyond measure great; in one year I think ninety in the diocese of London, and near fifty in that of Sarum. Farewell." [28]

A severe attack of indisposition confined him to the house at the commencement of the session; but by the 25th of November he was nearly in his usual health. "My feeling, when so ill on Wednesday morning, was, that I had not been active enough in the cause of God: oh let me now employ with greater diligence the powers which he has restored." [29] "26th. Lord Camden called, and sat an hour with me on Irish matters. Milner came in the evening. 27th. Milner and Pearson—long discussion about liberty and

[28] To W. Hey Esq. Nov. 19. [29] Journal, Nov. 25.

necessity. Pearson conquered completely. Walked morning, with Pitt and Grenville—much talk about income tax. Dec. 6th. Milner off. Much affected about religious unbelief—'worst and hardest trial when one has made a bridge, to have it taken from one.' Pitt's plan of income tax seems well received upon the whole." He took an active part in perfecting the details of this measure, spending several mornings "at Pitt's, with Cookson and Gott from Leeds, about the income tax. Met Sargent there, and all struck out a plan for commercial incomes."[30] "With Cookson and Gott at Pitt's all morning. We hit off a plan for commercial commission.[31] Walker says the manufacturers can't and won't pay."

He held also a conspicuous place in the concluding debates of this year. "Dec. 20th. Complained of misrepresentation of parliamentary speeches, and suggested a remedy." In opposing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act upon the following day, Mr. Courtenay made a violent attack upon the treatment of the state prisoners confined in Cold Bath Fields Prison; and in a taunting tone especially invoked in their behalf the sympathies of Mr. Wilberforce. He was well acquainted with the management of that prison, both from personal inspection, (a work of charity to which he had been long accustomed,[32]) and constant com-

[30] Diary, Dec. 13. [31] Ib. 17.

[32] He had received with no small pleasure from Howard the philanthropist, just before his death, a copy of his last work, with a request that he would "accept this book from him as a small testimony of his esteem."

munication with Dr. Glasse one of the visiting magistrates. He entered the House in the course of the debate, and "found Courtenay speaking. Got Glasse's minutes, and answered well, but perhaps too lightly."[33] His reply was remarkably effective: its accurate acquaintance with the subject completely refuted Mr. Courtenay's graver charges, whilst it abounded in ready humour, and apposite allusions drawn from the most various sources. "The hon. gent. tells us the prisoners are starved. But what says a visiting magistrate who lately sent me the result of his own observation? With the permission of the House, I will read his very words. 'I saw their dinner: better I would not wish on my own table. It was roast beef and plum pudding.' Aye, sir, and my friend is a doctor of divinity! Why this difference of statement reminds me of Parson Adams' bewilderment, when one passenger assured him as the stage drove by a mansion, that its owner was the best husband and father, and the most generous friend, in the whole world; whilst another woke up at the moment with the exclamation, What a fine estate! what a pity it belongs to such a rascal! The simplicity of Parson Adams led him to conclude that they must be speaking of two different persons.—Now, sir, though I do not mean to charge the hon. gent. with being a Parson Adams in simplicity, yet surely when he hears these dissimilar accounts he may well doubt whether they describe the self-same place."

[33] Diary.

"How long is it, Wilberforce," whispered Pitt, leaning over from the treasury bench as he sat down, "since you read Joseph Andrews?"

Mr. Courtenay, smarting under this unexpected chastisement, attempted a retort, when a few days later the subject was again before the House. After quoting in a tone of ridicule a passage from Mr. Wilberforce's work on "Practical Christianity," he complained of the "Christian rancour and religious facetiousness" with which he had been treated. He was taught in Mr. Wilberforce's answer, that "a religious man might sometimes be facetious," as he was reminded that "the irreligious did not of necessity escape being dull." The review of these debates in the Journal affords a striking instance of the rigid scrutiny to which he subjected his conduct. Though he had transgressed in no degree the strictest limits of temperate debate, yet he found "causes of humiliation in these last few days. What solicitude about human estimation! (which is perhaps the cause of all the rest.) I humbly hope that I have been schooling myself; but oh how much do I want of that unruffled love which should reign in the heart of the true Christian! This need not, nor I think should it, prevent his actively, and perhaps even warmly, engaging in debate, and reproving vice. But there should be love within, and where that is, it will show itself in outward marks. I hope I feel no ill-will to any, and I pray and strive against it. Oh what are the little reproaches and assaults I encounter, compared with those under which Stephen

could say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' and, 'Father, forgive them!' Let me strive to grow in humility, in disesteem and disrelish of worldly estimation, and in love. In what a fermentation of spirits was I on the night of answering Courtenay! How jealous of character and greedy of applause! Alas! alas! Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." [34]

"House Dec. 22nd, and found Tierney speaking. Sparred about Lord Auckland. Income tax till late." "I am pleading," he says, "with Pitt the cause of poor clergymen and other small life-income persons and large families: for the latter I think successfully; for the former I doubt. It will be a dreadful increase for a man of £260 per annum, to pay instead of £4 or £5, (the amount of his assessed taxes,) £26, the new intended impost. What a world it is! I bless God, London is a place which speaks loudly in one's ears the lesson of the apostle, 'The fashion of this world passeth away.'" [35]

"31st. House—Tierney's complaint of misrepresentation in the Times—sad work—went off well providentially. The Morning Chronicle falsely charges me with the author[ship], or sending [of the article]." [36] "We have had warm work in parliament of late," he tells Lord Muncaster, "and I have been taking a more forward part than I like. The most gross and scandalous misrepresentations of my speeches have been

[34] Journal, Dec. 23.

[35] Letter to Mrs. Hannah More, Dec. 15.

[36] Diary.

lately made in the Morning Chronicle, and there seems a general disposition to proceed against the opposition papers if Tierney compels us to proceed against the Times. There never was given in any paper a tolerable account of one of the most masterly pieces of reasoning I ever heard, when Pitt contended at large with a view to prove the impracticability and injustice of taxing capital rather than income." [37]

Jan. 1st, 1799. "I meant to-day to be devoted to religious offices, but the House's meeting prevented more than receiving the sacrament this morning, and a little reading to-night. I am now going to private prayer. What cause have I for humiliation, what room for improvement!" [38]

The beginning of this year was almost engrossed by the question of the Irish Union. Jan. 7th. "Supped at Pitt's, about Irish Union—he candid and open, but I do not like it. 11th. I have great doubts about the Union, and Bankes still more. French successes against Neapolitans. No mails arrive. Emperor of Russia behaving well. Pitt thinking things not so bad in Italy, and that the Emperor [of Austria] will be drawn in by the Queen of Naples. 18th. To town to discuss about Union with Bankes and Henry Thornton. 23rd. Dined Bankes's before House, which on Address for King's message about Union—Sheridan—Canning; what envy of him I saw universally—Grey, Tierney, and others going out when he got up." "25th. Pitt sanguine that after Union

[37] Dec. 28. [38] Journal.

Roman Catholics would soon acquire political rights: resolved to give up plan rather than exclude them. If Irish House did not pass something violent on Tuesday last he thinks it will go down. Accuses F. of breach of faith in stirring up instead of waiting. Pitt fair and honourable, as always, more than any other political man. Poor Burgh wild. Bankes clear and strong against it. Auckland evidently so secretly. Lord Clare for. Speaker now for, and satisfied. I hear the Roman Catholics more against it than they were. The Bishops all against Pitt's tithe plan. The King said, 'I am for it if it is for the good of the church, and against it if contra." [39]

"My objections to the Union," he tells Mr. Babington,[40] "decrease, if any thing, but the preponderance of my judgment is against it on the terms proposed. Pitt as usual is more fair and open, and well-intentioned, and even well-principled, than any other of his class. He is firmly persuaded that the Union will open the most promising way by which the Roman Catholics may obtain political power. Entre nous, it grows more doubtful whether it will be carried in Ireland, and the extreme vacuity and unacquaintedness with the great and complicated topics and questions . . many of them respecting first principles of government . . which one may perceive in many sensible, experienced, well-intentioned men, is surprising. The democrats are circulating the most flagrant falsehoods concerning

[39] Diary. [40] Jan. 25.

the Cold Bath Fields House of Correction. This whole transaction teaches us to look upwards and forwards, and to disregard human estimation. My old assailant, the Cambridge Chronicle, is again at work on me, making parliamentary speeches for me, and then censuring them." 28th. "News came yesterday of Irish rejection of the Union. Dundas still talks as if sanguine of carrying it shortly.[41] Feb. 10th. My judgment at length made up for the Union—Lord Cornwallis talks of 'Boroughs hawking by those infatuated people, and an apathy about the Union.' Bankes's political integrity great."

His great desire in supporting the Union, was to widen the basis of political power, and so destroy that predominant influence of a few great families, by which Ireland had been long misgoverned. In whatever respects his hopes were frustrated, in this at least he deemed them abundantly fulfilled. "From this time," he warmly declared, "never were the true interests of any country more fairly and liberally consulted." Many of the evils of the old system came out in the discussions which followed the rebellion. "When a statement had been made to the House of the cruel practices, approaching certainly to torture, by which the discovery of concealed arms had been enforced, John Claudius Beresford rose to reply, and said with a force and honesty, the impression of which I never can forget, 'I fear and feel deep shame in making the avowal—I fear it is too true—I defend it not—but

[41] Diary.

I trust I may be permitted to refer, as some palliation of these atrocities, to the state of my unhappy country, where rebellion and its attendant horrors had roused on both sides to the highest pitch all the strongest passions of our nature.' I was with Pitt in the House of Lords when Lord Clare replied to a similar charge—'Well, suppose it were so; but surely,' &c. I shall never forget Pitt's look. He turned round to me with that high indignant stare which sometimes marked his countenance, and stalked out of the House."[42]

"11th. House. Irish propositions till late. Wanted to speak, but no opportunity. 14th. Very ill all day. Evening, mended—but not well enough to go to the House—where meant to go, and speak. Too solicitous about it." At this time he wrote to Lord Muncaster:

"My dear Muncaster,

You will perhaps be surprised not to see my name in the debates upon the Union. The fact is, that I had no good opportunity until the day on which all the young Lords delivered their harangues, and I should then have said my say, but for my being so unwell that I could not venture to the House; though till the very last moment I would not abandon the attempt. Bankes and I canvassed the question together, and it ended in our embracing different opinions; the separation, as often happens in political

[42] Con. Mem.

questions, at last resolving itself into a different way of viewing one single argument. Burgh is still on fire, and I dare scarcely tell him how decidedly I am favourable to the measure.

"Foreign politics are in a very doubtful state. The Austrian minister had positively promised, and pledged his honour to the King of Naples, yet 'in exilium præceps fugit.' The Emperor has brought himself into the state in which a man is apt to be involved by timid, and still more by dishonest and selfish, counsels. The French force him either to go to war with every disadvantage, or to put himself almost into their power by sending away the Russian troops who are come by his invitation, and thus incensing his only active confederate. If Austria does go to war, Russia will. Of the two, she has behaved lately the most handsomely. A few days will determine the result.

I am ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Feb. 23rd. Gave dinner to Abbot, H. Legge, Attorney-General,[43] Mrs. ——, &c. Rational day for men, but bad for women. Attorney-General, Abbot, Legge, all strongly condemning Mackintosh's giving lectures in Lincoln's Inn Hall. I had thoughts of attending. Pitt and Speaker prevailed upon the Benchers, and Chancellor approves." "Carlyle earnest about editing Bible in Arabic." "Monday. Long

[43] Sir John Scott.

discussion with Bishop of London. He frank, amiable, and pious. Evening, A.'s, where Hatsel, alarmed at itinerancy. Their low notions about giving livings."[44]

The conduct of the Abolition question was now his chief business. "Forced," he says, Feb. 20th, "to put off Slave business to-day. Coloured delegate from Antigua showed me advertisement for skilful whipper—indignant at degraded state."[45] "I suspect," wrote Mr. Stephen, "that the advertisement you showed me is a device of those half wise and wholly unprincipled people, whom you have the glory of having for your enemies. I do not warn you of this for your own credit, you have a security they wot not of. What an advantage it is of virtue over vice, that though a pure heart (from its own experience, alas) knows how to find out one that is corrupt, the bad cannot comprehend the principle on which such as you act; but I should exult in exposing this villany, if such it be."[46] Such however it was not; it was too faithful an expositor of the occasional enormities of that detested system.

Upon the 1st of March Mr. Wilberforce brought forward his motion for immediate Abolition. The sameness of a contest which had lasted for eleven years, was in some degree relieved by the wit of Mr. Canning, and the eloquence of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce. Having shown the folly of leaving, as was now proposed, the work of Abolition to colonial legislation, he again brought before the House the

[44] Diary. [45] Ib. [46] Feb. 26.

evils which its continuance inflicted upon Africa. "The coast of that great continent, for a distance of four thousand miles, is kept by the influence of this trade in the lowest state of darkness, ignorance, and blood. Such has been the effect of intercourse with Europe. For contrary to all experience, the civilization of the interior is three centuries advanced. Yet even there, may be perceived some fatal influence from this deadly traffic. The storm upon the surface stirs slightly even the still depths of ocean." Again he warned the House not "to provoke the wrath of Heaven by this hardened continuance in acknowledged guilt. I do not mean, sir, that we must expect to see the avenging hand of Providence laid bare in hurricanes and earthquakes; but there is an established order in God's government, a sure connexion between vice and misery, which through the operation of natural causes, works out His will and vindicates His moral government."

Though defeated by a majority of 84 to 54, he was convinced that the cause was gaining ground, and set himself to introduce into the system some immediate mitigation of its horrors.

"If you can hit off," he wrote to Mr. Stephen,[47] "any effectual mode of preventing the importations for opening new lands, you will render a most essential service to humanity. I have no doubt we could carry through our House any bill which should cut off this great limb without doing more."

[47] March 25.

Two other measures of last year were now revived; one, carried through by Mr. William Smith, for regulating the middle passage; and the other, brought forward upon the 5th of March by Mr. Henry Thornton, for confining the trade within certain limits upon the coast of Africa. Upon the second reading of this bill "Pitt coolly put off the debate when I had manifested a design of answering P.'s speech, and so left misrepresentations without a word. William Smith's anger, Henry Thornton's coolness—deep impression on me, but conquered I hope in a Christian way. Income Tax Bill—suggested amendments; that for valuing land Pitt at last forced to admit; others not."[48] "15th. House, where taken ill, and forced home. Shocked to see P. and all the rest opposing Bill for limiting from part of African coast, like entire abolition, alas! 19th. Better, but not permitted to go out. Limitation Bill in House. Evening Thornton called, and we discussed for some time. 20th. House—Limitation Bill, second reading carried.

"April 12th. Dined with Thornton, and House—Limitation Bill—counted out, (as yesterday,) but now his Bill carried first. 16th. Town early. Prison committee. House counted out as usual on Smith and Dolben's Bill. 18th. Saw Belgrave about Sunday newspapers. Stephen earnest about St. Vincent Carib lands. 22nd. House till past twelve. Address on the Union—Canning clever indeed—Douglas heavy—Lord Sheffield reading—Pitt pegging Fitzpatrick. 26th. Cold day, so did

[48] Diary, March 13.

not go to St. James's with Union Address, but staid at Broomfield and wrote society's paper."[49]

His health had been unusually delicate this spring. "A serious return," he told Mr. Hey,[50] "of illness, availing itself of the very severe and cheerless north-eastern blasts, has stuck to me more obstinately than usual. This has compelled me to lessen the number of my working hours, and has crowded into them such a multitude of matters, that I have been quite unable to clear my way." This had enforced a "private resolution," which he tells Lord Muncaster[51] he "had been forced to form, of giving up the dining system: for the evening is the only time when I can get an hour or two of uninterrupted quiet, and I cannot, like Burgh, extend my working hours at pleasure; expend a copious stream of midnight oil, and then be as fresh the next day as if nothing had happened." This resolution withdrew him in a measure from general society. "I must be more executive. Dined at home before the House, refusing Pitt to meet old friends."[52] "I seem to separate quietly from acquaintance."[53] "Dined at Lord Camden's, first late dinner for months, to meet Pitt, Lord Chatham, Bishop of Lincoln, Steele, Pepper Arden. Conversation too loose—great successes of the Austrians over the French—Pitt less sanguine than formerly, but hoping that six months will see the thing out."[54] More than once he mentions in his Journal this com-

[49] Diary. [50] April 8. [51] Feb. 22.
[52] Diary, May 3. [53] Ib. March 24. [54] Ib. April 17.

parative "quiet as having had some good effect upon his heart, in enabling him a little to realize unseen things, and live more in the fear of God."[55] "I have been more able to bridle my passions, and be more meek and gentle, and really full of love."[56]

These impressions he was most solicitous to deepen, setting apart from time to time a day for abstinence, and meditation. "Saturday at Broomfield all day. I meant it to be a day devoted to God. The morning serious, by myself, though not so completely as I had wished. I had refused several friends, but Carlyle[57] came suddenly with offer about Lord Elgin, and compelled to see him."[58] "I have with some difficulty and management kept this day clear, to be set apart for humiliation and devotion, and such abstinence as my body will bear. I am now about to fall to self-examination, and confession, and humiliation; looking into myself; condemning myself before God, and imploring forgiveness for Christ's sake. Oh what a terrible array of sins do I behold when I look back! —early renunciation of God; then, many years entirely sinful; then, since the good providence of God drew me forth from this depth of iniquity in the autumn of 1785, how little have I improved and grown in grace! Let me now humble myself, chiefly for forgetfulness of God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and invisible things; for ingratitude to God,

[55] Journal, March 3. [56] Ib. April 21.

[57] Rev. I. D. Carlyle, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, accompanied Lord Elgin in his embassy to Constantinople.

[58] Diary, May 4.

though loaded with mercies, recalled by sicknesses; . . a thousand gracious providences! I go to prayer, humbly throwing myself on the promised mercies of God in Christ."[59] "Though, I thank God, I am less sensual than I was, yet I find my heart cold and flat. To-day I received the sacrament, but how dead was I! O God, do Thou enlighten me. May I attain what is real in Christian experience, without running into a sect, or party set of opinions."[60]

The narrowness of party spirit was alien to the whole temper of his mind, and whether he abstained from general society, or remarked in it what he was compelled to blame, his judgments equally express a kind and healthful tone of feeling. "To Holwood by half-past four—Pitt riding out—Lord Camden and I. Villiers came, with whom walked. He said that Mrs. Villiers was reading my book—blamed my not associating. Pitt, Canning, and Pepper Arden came in late to dinner. I attacked Canning on indecency of Anti-Jacobin. Evening he and Pitt reading classics."[61] "My heart has been moved," says his Journal of the following day, "by the society of my old friends at Pitt's. Alas! alas! how sad to see them thoughtless of their immortal souls; so wise, so acute! I hope I felt in some degree properly on the occasion and afterwards; oh that I might feel more, and act more, and be more useful: may God bless me through Christ."[62] "Pitt's birth-day—low-spirited

[59] Journal, May 4.
[60] Ib. May 12.
[61] Diary, May 18.
[62] Journal, May 19.

—dined Dundas's great entertainment—Duke and Duchess of Gordon, and others. I could not assimilate, and all flat and cold."[63]

Though he mixed less with them in their social meetings, he was careful to avoid all causeless separation; and with Mr. Pitt especially, in spite of many political differences, he maintained much of the intimacy of earlier years. "The Bishop of Lincoln," he says, "good-natured; but Pitt having told me of his thinking the great bulk of the more serious clergy great rascals, [he is] not open, I fear. I have stated to Pitt all my ideas about [the] church, its state and evils, and the only mode of providing for its security. He listened earnestly, but no decisive opinion."[64] In these familiar interviews, Mr. Pitt laid before him the plans of administration, and often profited by his suggestions. "Government," he tells Mr. Hey,[65] "are about to bring forward some measures for suppressing the societies of United Englishmen and Britons; for preventing meetings in private, with engagements or oaths of secrecy; for compelling all debating and lecturing societies to furnish the means of notoriety to the magistrate; to secure that no printed paper shall be circulated without its bearing the name of some real person; and in short for giving the means of proceeding against the author or publisher, if really libellous: so far, I think, no man instructed by experience can object. Indeed I see nothing in all this contrary to the genuine principles

[63] Diary, May 28. [64] Ib. April 11. [65] April 8.

of political and social liberty. But another thing is under consideration of great delicacy and importance. I have not time to go into it fully, yet I wish to throw out something for you to ruminate upon. Some check is wished to be imposed on the indiscriminate right of preaching, which, as you perhaps know, has lately been exercised to a much greater extent than ever before. I have not yet thought on this difficult subject for one quarter of an hour. But the only expedients which have been suggested seem to me on the first view strongly objectionable, e. g. making the registration of conventicles not a matter of course, but empowering the magistrates to grant or withhold licences."

"Have I told you before," he writes a few months later, "(but do not speak of it,) that from alarm at the increasing assiduity of the itinerant home missionaries, who, many of them the most illiterate of men, take out their licences as dissenting teachers, and thus go about protected by the Toleration Act, some measures are in contemplation for limiting the privileges enjoyed under it. I saw this storm brewing in the spring, and warned Pitt against any infringement of perfect toleration, telling him that the principles to be adhered to were publicity and responsibility. To whom can the discretionary power of judging what teachers are duly qualified be justly committed? I dread these gathering clouds, &c."[66]

As the session advanced, engagements increased upon him. The Slave Trade Limitation Bill, which

[66] To Thomas Babington Esq. Nov. 5.

had passed the Commons on the second of May, was exposed to severe opposition in the upper House. He was continually occupied in providing the witnesses who were examined at the bar, and watching daily over the interests of the Bill. "To Grenville's about Slave Limitation Bill. Drew up petition to the Lords. Then to city to get Sierra Leone common seal." "House of Lords — Slave Bill." "Dawes and Macaulay dined with me. Then House of Lords — Slave Limitation evidence."[67] "June 4th. Did not go to the birth-day, because not well, and also Slave Limitation Bill not popular at court. 5th. To Bishop of Durham's—Proclamation Society—read Report. House of Lords—Slave Bill. Late to Broomfield with Macaulay. 8th. At Broomfield all day. Season uncommonly backward, scarce a beginning of leaves on our oaks. Mr. and Mrs. Wrangham dined with us, and Mr. Horner. Spirited conversation, (Anti-Jacobin, &c.)" . . "Pitt exerting himself about our Slave Limitation Bill. (—— never knew so severe a dressing as *Emanuel* received before the whole Cabinet about it.) Pitt resolves to move to stop new lands' cultivation next year—I wish it this year. French fleet into Toulon. My spirits low from Pitt's swaggering about finance. Put down for loan, which refused. I take to Grenville again for his fair Slave Trade conduct. Kenyon prejudiced by Lord Thurlow."

Nothing could exceed the hearty earnestness with

[67] Diary, May 31, &c.

which Lord Grenville defended the Limitation Bill. Unsupported by the immediate adherents of the government, he was left to withstand the repeated opposition of one member of the royal family, the commercial sagacity of Lord Liverpool, and the sturdy bluntness of Lord Thurlow; yet he was ready for every encounter, and maintained the conflict to the last. While this Bill was passing slowly through its different stages, Mr. Wilberforce was busy in the Commons with a measure prepared by Lord Belgrave and himself for suppressing Sunday newspapers. It was brought forward by Lord Belgrave upon the 27th of May; upon the 30th he successfully defended its enactments from the gibes of Mr. Sheridan; but "it was thrown out, June 11th, upon the second reading. Windham's speech philosophical. Jekyll's manner profane. I did not speak. The temper of the House against us. The Bishop of London deeply wounded at its loss." [68]

When the Bill was first designed, Mr. Pitt had promised Mr. Wilberforce his co-operation, but he was persuaded by Mr. Dundas to retract his pledge, that government might not be weakened by the loss of their unlawful succour; three out of the four Sunday newspapers supporting ministry. The measure, which had almost succeeded in the hands of independent men, would have been carried through triumphantly with Mr. Pitt's concurrence.

"June 16th. Taken quite unwell. 19th. Better,

[68] Diary.

but still kept unwillingly from London. Little done—but to-day serious thoughts on loving God and Christ, and prayer — Leighton, &c."[69] "My frame of mind," he notes on the following Sunday,[70] "better, I bless God, than for some time past. I hope that the leisure, and season, and space for recollection afforded by my late indisposition, has been the blessed means of reviving what was dead of Christian hope and faith. Yet, oh how languid are they still! What cause have I for earnest prayer, and diligent reading of Scripture, and constant watchfulness and self-examination!" "24th. House of Lords—Slave Limitation Bill. Macaulay's examination—he ill. Dawes's evidence middling, but the lawyers charmed with his honesty."[71] "30th. I taken ill again—suffering sadly. July 1st. Better, but still ill. 2nd. Stephen summing up before the House of Lords."

"Men in general," he writes at this time to Lord Muncaster, "are sanguine in their hopes, but my barometer does not rise and fall with every account which I receive from the continent. Would to God (most solemnly I say it) I could see more seriousness at home; then indeed I should take courage. I understand from all quarters that London was never before so gay, so splendid, so expensive, as this spring. Balls upon balls given by people who were hitherto unknown, and to whom in former days

[69] Diary. [70] Journal, June 23. [71] Diary.

the great world would not have gone. We have at length the strongest probability of carrying the Slave Limitation Bill. There has been no small ferment on this subject, and both Pitt and Grenville have been conducting themselves with great spirit, and some of our opponents have been humiliated. Have you read Park's book? In one place it will make your heart bleed; yet the man is held out as an abolitionist, either himself, or in the tendency of his work, which however Bryan Edwards superintended and edited. It pleads, trumpet-tongued, against that diabolical system of wickedness and cruelty." These favourable expectations were but short-lived.

"July 5th. Second reading of Slave Trade Limitation Bill in the House of Lords, when 27 only to 32, and 36 proxies each." The bishops' proxies all in favour of it. "Thurlow, profane balderdash. Westmoreland coarse. Bishop of Rochester, ill-judged application of Scripture. Grenville spoke well."[72] "Never," he adds upon the following day, "so disappointed and grieved by any defeat." "8th. To town early, to meet Pitt and Grenville about Slave Trade business—discussion for an hour; and private with Pitt—he sanguine about carrying it next year. Grenville says we had fourteen more, but for mistakes about proxies, and should have carried it. Pitt clear the King has used no influence against us. Lord A. shabby, staying away and keeping two proxies.

[72] Diary.

Stephen most earnest for our cause, but uncandid about Pitt; generously returning fees,[73] above £200, in the handsomest way."

Parliament was prorogued upon the 12th of July, and Mr. Wilberforce retired to the comparative rest of Broomfield. "The recess," he says,[74] "is beginning. Oh may I spend it well, and try more and more to devote my understanding, and heart, and all my faculties and powers, to the glory of God and Christ, being more and more weaned from vanity, and the love of this world's praise; yet more and more active, useful, indefatigable, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. Oh for more gratitude and love. Heard to-day of a clergyman in the Isle of Wight,[75] to whom my book was blessed. Oh praise, praise!" "We trust," he wrote to Mr. Newton who was leaving London for a while, "that you will not forget us in your rural rambles, for I doubt not you have many an oratory where the spreading foliage forms your canopy, and the natural sounds of the country join with you in a harmonious chorus of praise. Farewell, believe me ever affectionately yours."[76] After receiving Mr. Newton's answer, he writes again.

"Broomfield, July 27.

"My dear Sir,

I should be very unfeeling and ungrateful, if I could suffer so kind an effusion of the tenderness of an

[73] For examining witnesses, &c. before the House of Lords.
[74] Diary, July 21. [75] The Rev. Legh Richmond. [76] July 13.

absent friend to remain for a single day unanswered; especially as, through the abundant mercy of God, I am able to gratify your affectionate solicitude for me and mine by informing you that Mrs. W. has been safely delivered of a daughter, and both mother and infant are doing well. Surely I can never be sufficiently thankful for all the instances I have experienced of the goodness, the never-failing bounty, of my God and Saviour.

"I wish I could afford Mr. Taylor any satisfactory intelligence on the subject on which you have consulted me. I have frequently endeavoured to impress the minds of several of our bishops with the importance, merely in a view of sound church policy, of facilitating the building of chapels of ease; nor am I altogether without hopes of having made some impression: but I durst not presume so far on the effect I had produced, as to propose my measure as I wished last session of parliament. It is an object I shall keep steadily in my eye.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"I could not be quiet yesterday," he says the day after his birth-day,[77] "though I got a contemplative walk, and even to-day I have less time than I could wish for looking back through the year,

[77] Journal, Aug. 25.

and awakening pious gratitude for the multiplied mercies of God. How often have I been sick and restored! How few, if any, days of suffering, either bodily or mental! My wife and child going on well, and a daughter born (July 21st) and doing well. Instances repeatedly heard of my book doing good. How gracious is God through Christ, to fill my cup with blessings, yet not to lessen or commute in what is still more important!"

The time which he now had at his disposal was eagerly employed in general reading; and the first week of the recess he was engaged in "letters, Robertson, Hume, Bible, &c." Yet he was too near London to obtain the rest from business and society which his delicate constitution needed. "July 29th. Pitt sanguine—Buonaparte quite defeated. Pitt hopes a convention signed with King of Prussia, and Denmark: Sweden joining also in the measure. 30th. Was going to Holwood, but put off by Pitt, having a large party going to Lord Romney's review—table two miles long, waiting on horse-back, &c. Kilvington about Woolwich Academy—sad exhibition of petty tyranny among young men. Intended going to Woolwich business, but put off the design from illness.

"August 12th. Lord Romney's great fête to the King, 5600,[78] volunteer corps, &c. 14th. To town about Sierra Leone matters. Saw Pitt, who

[78] "The entertainment, to which 6500 persons sat down," &c. Ann Reg.

returned last night. Expedition for Holland sailed yesterday. Pitt sanguine, but looking forward to other campaigns. King of Prussia worse than ever. Pitt thinks fear—sanguine in hope of co-operation in the country. Littledale, Hope, &c. say no; they behaved so ill before our soldiery. Our colony[79] in extreme peril; I pressing Pitt to befriend us. 15th. Town betimes—council of five—Admiralty—then Sierra Leone House till past four. Dined at Henry Thornton's, King's Arms Yard, with Macaulay. 17th. When intending letters, Venn came in and desired me to go to the Archbishop's about Missionary Society. After deliberation I went and had a long talk with the Archbishop.[80] 25th. Milner preached his Buxton Sermon on Christianity's corruptions. All serious persons much struck with it. Afternoon, Milner and I talked about Carlyle's affair. Much difficulty about his money. Then disputed with Milner about final perseverance. 26th. Wrote to Pitt about Carlyle. Doubts about Porson's going to Constantinople. Taken ill again yesterday, and sent an excuse to Pitt to put off Holwood."[81]

These repeated attacks (fever, accompanied by other debilitating symptoms) at length convinced him

[79] Sierra Leone.

[80] The next year (July 24) he informed the Rev. John Scott of the result of his application: that the Archbishop, whom he had urged to place himself at the head of the society, would look on its proceedings with candour, and regretted that he could not with propriety at once express his full concurrence.

[81] Diary.

of the necessity of more entire repose. "Fraser," he says,[82] "earnest with me to lie by, and relax—and sure (just as Milner) that I shall break down otherwise." He consented therefore to leave the neighbourhood of London, and set off, Aug. 31st, for Teston, whence he writes to Hannah More:

"Sept. 4.

"My dear Friend,

The Grants and we (which comprehensive word includes all my family) came here on Saturday last, and are enjoying the finest weather we have had this year in this most beautiful place, which never looked more charming. Poor Mrs. Bouverie! It is affecting to think how soon the dead are forgotten. The cause of my coming here was the shameful suit instituted against Sir Charles.

"So you are got back to head-quarters. I dread lest the next account should state the return of your complaints, yet I trust, though you could not be prevailed on to prolong your recess, you will attend to your health as much as is compatible with a tolerable discharge of your functions. I want to know how the proceedings against you go on, or whether they are laid aside, as I wish to hear. Milner and Fraser have been giving me a most serious and forcible lecture on the necessity of taking care of myself, and of living a more quiet life. Now that I experience the necessity of checking myself in my disposition to work, I look back with

[82] Diary, Aug. 25.

regret, not unmixed with shame and compunction, on that period of my life when I was more equal to labour, both bodily and mental. What a mercy it is, that with all our sinking sense of unworthiness and unprofitableness, there is a throne of grace to which we may resort with the assured hope of acceptance through faith in a Redeemer! I rejoice in the rapid sale of the book.

Yours ever affectionately,
with kind remembrances to
Lieut.-General Martha,
W. WILBERFORCE."

CHAPTER XVI.

SEPTEMBER 1799 TO DECEMBER 1800.

Bath—Temporary retirement—Buonaparte's proposals—Return to town—Scarcity—Defeats an attempt to alter Toleration Act—Bill against bull-baiting—West Indian anticipations—Clamours for peace—Bognor—Anxiety respecting Mrs. Wilberforce—Attempts to remedy the distress of the lower orders.

AFTER a fortnight spent at Teston, he returned to Broomfield, "parliament being summoned on the 24th of September for sending the militia to Holland. Much shocked at the idea."[1] He did not however await the meeting. A recurrence of his late attacks made it plain that he was as yet unfit for business, and "giving up the House, though much discomposed, he set off" on Milner's and Fraser's opinion "upon 13th for Bath. Here he spent four months in full enjoyment of domestic life; "with more quiet than ever since we married;"[2] "getting through a good deal of work and reading." He mixed but little in society; and only for some such specific purpose, as, "Oct. 8th —evening to H.'s at Mrs. H.'s desire—and hoped with

[1] Diary. [2] Ib.

some serious intention, but found none. He looked like a skeleton, yet gay and irreligious. I tried in vain to bring him to close quarters." [3] He "dined at Acklom's" also "to meet Ellis, by particular desire, about West Indies. He well meaning and liberal, but too far off to close on middle term—Acklom middle way." [4] "Here have we been," he writes to Hannah More,[5] "near a week. You and your house and your proceedings have been constantly in my mind and much in my talk since our arrival. . . . . How are you in health? Do not, I beg of you, omit an autumnal course of waters. Have not I a right to pronounce this injunction; I, M. P. for the county of York, who on the very day of parliament meeting am writing to you from Bath, and with no intention of going up?"

Compelled for a season to give up public life, his Diary shows that he watched quietly from his retirement the course of its troubled waters. "Nov. 9th. Troops come back from Holland—Pitt's own doing, as soon as Duke of York thought no more to be done; it had been resolved before that 40,000 more to go over. Owen's exemplary conduct, and soldiers more religious and moral than common. Austria and Russia defeated in Switzerland; Zurich taken by the French. Duke of York's convention, and 8000 men sent to man their fleet. Suwarrow a most wonderful man, never defeated, his power of conciliating attachment and confidence unequalled. Soldiers always shout when they see him. 17th. Dismal accounts of the state of the harvest, and

[3] Diary, Oct. 8. [4] Jan. 10, 1800. [5] Bath, Sept. 21.

of the sowing corn for next year. Fears of famine. Alas, what a world!"[6]

"Near Bath, Nov. 5, 1799.

"My dear Muncaster,

My history is this. Smarting from past experience of the incessant interruptions inseparable from a residence in Bath, from the first week of my arrival I employed myself in looking about for a villa, and my industry was quickened when it became probable that I might be able to spend the following three months at a distance from the capital; but we searched in vain for near a month. At length we have succeeded, and we are quartered in a middling house, which however has the comfort of a tolerable garden, and above all the recommendation of withdrawing us from the circle of the Pump-room; and by showing that we are willing to pay a price for retirement, of procuring for us a right to be quiet without offence. The Chancellor, Pepper Arden, Lord Camden, and the Archbishop of Canterbury have all been here; the latter is still with us." "I went last Sunday to a church where he administered the sacrament, and heard him read the service inimitably." "I thank God I am certainly better, and Mrs. Wilberforce, and Mrs. Clarke, and our little ones are as well as can be expected.

"I have just received your letter, and knowing the keenness of your sensibility, I feel for you on the convention of Holland. I own I never much relished the

[6] Diary.

expedition, nor do I think that such schemes are the *forte* of our administration. I used to blame your extravagant exaltation of the talents of our premier. I, who yet declare it as my fixed opinion that, in many intellectual and some moral excellences, I never knew his equal, (so far as religion is not concerned,) am not blind to his infirmities.

"Gisborne another book! he deserves to live in a forest. May God bless you and yours. Kind remembrances.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. I dare not be quite certain, but am nearly so, that you may send back your war-horse to his former peaceful pursuits, and call for the . . . What a business that provisional cavalry!"

"Wilberforce has bought a house near Bath," says Henry Thornton,[7] "which I a little lament, on the ground of the bad economy of it; for he is a man, who, were he in Norway or Siberia, would find himself infested by company; since he would even produce a population, for the sake of his society, in the regions of the earth where it is the least. His heart also is so large that he never will be able to refrain from inviting people to his house. The quiet and solitude he looks to will, I conceive, be impossible, and the Bath house will be troubled with exactly the same heap of fellows as the Battersea Rise one."

[7] Mr. Henry Thornton to Mrs. Hannah More, Oct. 30.

"I bless God," he tells Mr. Babington,[8] "I certainly am much improved in health since our arrival here; and we are now on a plan of great quiet, regularity, and ease. This is using the means, and I desire to use them with cheerfulness and gratitude, leaving the event to God. We have been reading, and are still engaged on, Gisborne's Moral Philosophy; and I am quite pleased I own to be able to say, that I think he has fully established his charge against Paley, and shown, with great effect, how little such a principle as general expediency is fit for man. If I mistake not there are some errors, and I doubt if he might not have made his charge against Paley still more manifestly valid. I am glad to find he is publishing again. While he goes on thus, I will allow him to live in a forest. I found that so much use was made of my going to Jay's that I have kept away."

The improvement of his health, and increase of his knowledge, were not the only ends which he sought to attain from this opportunity of leisure. He began and closed it with a day of more than ordinary devotion, and his weekly Diary marks the careful watch which he kept over his spirit. "For some time," he says,[9] "I have resolved to allot this day to God; to spiritual exercises, especially in the way of humiliation. Fasting disqualifies me, God knoweth, for religious communion by disordering my body, so all I can do here is to be very temperate. I am now about, as it seems, . . but let me remember how uncertain are

[8] Nov. 5. [9] Journal, Oct. 3.

all earthly prospects, . . to spend near four months quietly, compared with my past life; wherein I shall be able to attend to my health, which, next to my soul's prosperity, it seems right to make my chief object; and at the same time to study a good deal, and cultivate faculties, my neglect of which I number among my very criminal omissions. My objects therefore in this day of solemn supplication and (in my measure) fasting, are to beg God's guidance and blessing on my endeavours to spend the ensuing interval between this time and the meeting of parliament, piously, usefully, wisely, holily; first, however, humbly imploring pardon for all my past manifold offences, which to be particularly noted, and earnestly supplicating for grace to deliver me from the bondage of my corruptions. Then should come praise and thanksgiving, for the multiplied and prodigious mercies and blessings of God. Then resignation and self-dedication to God, desiring to submit myself to Him to do and suffer His will. Lastly, intercession.

"To prepare me for all the rest, let me open by earnestly praying to Him to bless me in my present attempts, to chase away from me all evil spirits, and all wandering thoughts and worldly interruptions, and to soften, enlighten, warm, enlarge, and sustain my heart, and my spirits also, that I may not weary in the work, but delight in it, and rejoice in the privilege of spending a day in communion with my God and Saviour."

"Last year," he says upon the 5th of January,

1800,[10] "has been marked with mercies to me. . . . When I look back upon the time spent here, it seems but a week or two, instead of since the 28th of October; and when I look forward to London life, how do I recoil from it! I humbly hope that I am resolutely determined for Christ, and not solicitous about worldly greatness, wealth, reputation. . . And now that I am on the point of returning to London, I would humbly pray for a large measure of grace to enable me to stand against the world, the flesh, and the devil. I would humbly resolve through the Spirit to live by faith, and to go on diligently, devoutly, humbly, endeavouring to glorify God and benefit my fellow-creatures."

In this spirit he returned to public life. "This week," he says,[11] "came the account of Buonaparte's letter, and Lord Grenville's answer. I am grieved to the heart, fearful that I must differ, but leave off consideration until indispensable, and I can hear what Pitt says. Whitwell says people angry. Ellis disapproves. Burgh sure that the Union will not be carried in Ireland, yet manifestly afraid."

Before he returned to town he wrote to Lord Muncaster.

"Jan. 7.

"My dear Muncaster,

'Merry Christmasses' and 'happy New Years,' and all the good wishes that ever were poured forth from the fullest reservoir of benevolence within the heart of

[10] Journal. [11] Diary, Jan. 12.

man; or rather which, like some rivers, gushed out spontaneously with a force not to be resisted; all these have inundated me, and still I remain dry and silent. Oil we know resists water more than any thing, and if I were polished all over with the courtly varnish of St. James's, it might be accounted for; but that a man who has not shown his face at court for these eighteen months, should thus suffer his friends to have so slippery a hold of him, is wonderful indeed, and not to be accounted for on the ordinary principles of human depravity. Yet, though so long silent, I have not been unfeeling, and though I have kept my emotions to myself, I have been warmed with cordial good wishes for the happiness of you and yours. And now, though somewhat of the latest, accept my hearty prayers for your welfare here and hereafter.

"The day of meeting approaches. You ask me what is then to come forward. I know not positively, though I suspect that the Income Tax Bill will be one of our first matters; and that the recent correspondence between the King and Buonaparte will find us some discussion. On this head I would be loth to form a hasty opinion. But I must say I was shocked at Lord Grenville's letter; for though our government might feel adverse to any measure which might appear to give the stamp of our authority to Buonaparte's new dignity, yet I must say that, unless they have some better reason than I fear they possess for believing that he is likely to be hurled from his

throne, it seems a desperate game to play—to offend, and insult, and thereby irritate this vain man beyond the hope of forgiveness. Alas! alas! Muncaster, my heart aches. However there is a perfect home of love, and peace, and happiness, and we are invited to the enjoyment of it. Let every fresh proof therefore of the unsatisfactoriness of human things have the effect of urging us forward towards this one true point of rest with renewed energy.

Believe me ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"I forbear to form an opinion," he wrote ten days later to a friend who applied for information, "until I shall have heard from Mr. Pitt the principles on which he justifies Lord Grenville's answer. It naturally indeed suggests itself, that supposing Buonaparte to have tottered on his pedestal, our government, by indicating a disposition to treat with him, would have fixed him in his place. If therefore there appeared a considerable probability of his fall, it might be advisable to reject his offer flatly. But as I said before, I can only guess; I am as yet uninstructed in particulars, and I therefore pause." [12]

He reached the neighbourhood of London upon the 23rd of January, two days after parliament had met; and on the 24th "wrote to Pitt, and he sent for me to town. I saw him. Till then I was strongly disposed to condemn the offer of Buonaparte's offer to

[12] To F. Hare Naylor Esq. Jan. 16.

treat; greatly shocked at it. He shook me. 27th. To town for House, but business put off on account of Pitt's cold. Called at Bankes's and discussed politics. Slowly came over to approve of the rejection of Buonaparte's offer, though not of Lord Grenville's letter. Gisborne and Babington both did so more clearly." [13]

TO THE RIGHT HON. W. PITT.

"My dear Pitt,

I feel the force of what you urged on Friday, superadded to my own reflections, which you will believe were scarcely unbiassed, and though I confess, frankly, that I should have rejoiced if you could have seen it safe and proper to consent to negociate *generally*, yet I yield to the considerations you stated, and to the duty of not contradicting those in executive government in whom one has been used to repose confidence, in a case especially of such capital importance, without being at least perfectly sure that they are wrong, and that I am right myself. I hope the address will not go into particulars: indeed I presume not, as the message does not.

Believe me, my dear Pitt,

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Battersea Rise, Monday morning.

"I hope you are yourself quite well again to-day."

[13] Diary.

Having arrived at this conclusion, though with such reluctance, he felt bound in support of administration to avow it in the House. With this speech in the debate of Feb. 17th, he pronounces himself "extremely discontented."[14] "Pitt," he says, "sanguine that Russians and Austrians quite well agreed, and Austrians persuaded by Lord Minto to accept Russian forces; yet within a week, Russians marching home, quarrelling with Austrians. Some reliance placed upon the Chouans, but nothing heard of them since. Lord St. Helen's quite blaming ministry; so also Lord Teignmouth. Bankes, Henry, and I long doubtful, but on the whole agreeing. I too earnest and strong in speaking, so as to wear the face of being more warlike than I really was."

"I need not, I hope, assure you," he wrote to a friend, whose high opinion of Buonaparte had led him to regret Mr. Pitt's decision, "how long and anxiously I pondered over the question. I do not recollect any public measure on which, when it became absolutely necessary for me to take one side or the other, I so much doubted which was right. But it often happens, that when, after painful deliberation, the mind is at length made up, and an opinion is to be declared, that scale which perhaps preponderated but by a single grain, obtains the whole notice; inasmuch as the object is to state the result of cogitation, (to use a good old-fashioned word,) not the particulars of which it consisted, with all the shiftings, and hesitations, and

[14] Diary.

balancings, and counterbalancings of the mind; and to the world therefore we may appear ten times more decided and strong than we really are. So it has been with me in the present instance. I sicken at the campaign which is breaking out, but I am not clear enough to warrant my actively interfering or concurring to oppose those ministers whose system I have hitherto supported, and whose leader has been brought to consent to treat for peace with a sincere desire of effecting it, (I speak from unequivocal proofs, which have fallen under my own notice,) and who still does not talk the violent language used by some of his colleagues. You will agree with me, I am sure, that except in a very clear case we should not interfere legislatively, and take the management of affairs out of the hand of the executive power." [15]

In the debate of February 13th, upon the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus, he again supported ministers in a speech on which he looked back with less dissatisfaction. Other business now multiplied upon him. "Much occupied," he says, Feb. 17th, "about the scarcity; urging government, which sadly torpid and tardy—Sheffield and Speaker our way. King but middling. Dutch expedition debate. Government made good their point. Canning clever . . genius . . but too often speaking, and too flippant and ambitious. All things rising in price. What shocking work, Grattan and Corry fighting during debate, and Cradock putting the sheriff into a ditch, who stopping

[15] To F. Hare Naylor Esq.

them. All people disapproving of Grenville's uncivil answer, though in general approving of rejection of overture. Pitt too much encouraging Canning; of whom, however, a sad envy prevails. House of Lords' agreement, moved by Archbishop of Canterbury, drawn up by Lord Auckland, who had not told colleagues. Grenville and Chancellor scorning, and saying parliament had better have let it alone, and that scarcity exaggerated. Poor Burgh almost mad about the Union. I am fearful of his doing or writing some extravagant thing." "March 16th. The last fortnight sadly disturbed—canal and other business—potatoe, fish, &c."[16]

"I have been striving," he tells Lord Muncaster, "to prevail on my Yorkshire manufacturers to make herrings half cured a material article of their consumption. You cannot well imagine how much prejudice must be encountered in such an attempt."[17] The prospect of increasing scarcity rendered this a gloomy season. "We know not what times are coming on, but if God be for us, who can be against us? Oh may I therefore lay up treasure in heaven, and wait upon the Lord." "Now that He seems about to try His people, what cause have I to pray, and gird up the loins of my mind! May I grow in grace, and become more 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' How amiable is the simple, childlike spirit of Lady Catherine Graham!" "I have much before me, oh that God would enable me, and move

[16] Diary, March 16.

[17] Letter to Lord Muncaster.

the hearts of others: doubtless I might better hope it, if I were deeply earnest in prayer."[18]

The plan which he was most anxious to persuade the minister to sanction, throughout this time of scarcity, would have proved no less politic than it was humane. Instead of meeting the present emergency, increased as it was by the sudden change of prices, by the ordinary machinery of Poor's Rates, and so establishing a dangerous precedent, he would have made an extraordinary grant for cases of extreme distress: but he could not prevail. "I am much grieved at Pitt's languor about the scarcity. They will do nothing effectual. Great sufferings of the West Riding people. I dread lest God have given our government over to a spirit of delusion—that they should think of attacking the Dissenters and Methodists! I fear the worst. I am very doubtful if we had not better have consented to treat. Chouans seem melted away—Russia gone—Austria too perhaps. Pitt I am convinced has no trust in me on any religious subject. To see this design drawn out in a bill! Never so much moved by any public measure."[19]

This was the impression of a moment of despondency: for though one at least to whose opinion Mr. Pitt naturally deferred on questions which concerned religion, was continually on the watch to lessen Mr. Wilberforce's influence, it was still great, and in this very instance successful. "There are ideas," he tells Mr. Hey, "of materially abridging the privileges en-

[18] Journal, March 16, and April 13. [19] Diary, March 16.

joyed under the Toleration Act. I am persuaded that restraints would quicken the zeal of the Methodists and Dissenters to break through them, that prosecutions would be incessant, and that the prevalence of the persecuted opinions and the popularity of the persecuted teachers would be the sure result. I hope still that I may be able to prevent any strong measure from being brought forward. I am not at liberty to open to you."[20] Two days afterwards he writes,[21] "All on the important subject on which I lately wrote to you remains in statu quo; except that the Methodists have got to the knowledge of some measures being in contemplation, through Michael Angelo Taylor at Durham. I have kept them quiet. I am more and more clear that if the measure does go forward, the effects will be most important."

"I told Mr. Pitt that I was ready to assent to one restriction, namely, that no one should exercise the office of a teacher without having received a testimonial from the sect to which he should belong. This would put a stop to the practice which I am told prevails at Salisbury, and (as I heard from Mr. Jay the dissenting minister) at Bath, of a number of raw, ignorant lads going out on preaching parties every Sunday. I fear the Bishop of Lincoln (this is whispered to your private ear in the strictest confidence) will renew his attempt next year. If such a bill as was lately in contemplation

[20] To W. Hey Esq. March 29.
[21] To Thomas Babington Esq. April 2.

should pass, it would be the most fatal blow both to church and state, which has been struck since the Restoration.

"I believe I before told you, and I do not retract the sentiment on further reflection, that I place more dependence on Mr. Pitt's moderation and fairness of mind, (though less in this instance than in any other,) than either on the House of Lords or Commons. In short, so utterly ignorant in all religious matters is the gay world, and the busy, and the high, and the political, that any measure government should propose would be easily carried. I find no success in my endeavours to convince my friends on the bench, of the expediency of facilitating the building of new churches with a right of patronage. More than once I have proposed in private a general law to that effect; but it would answer no good end to bring forward such a measure in the House of Commons, without having previously secured support for it."[22]

Amongst his private papers, there appears a full statement of the great service to religious peace which he rendered on this occasion. "A member[23] of parliament, who on his accession to a large fortune, by his father's death, discontinued the practice of the legal profession, but who acted as a magistrate with a considerable sense of his own importance, got into a quarrel with a person who came to be licensed as a dissenting teacher. Finding the applicant very ignorant, and somewhat forward, he at first resisted the man's claim, but dis-

[22] To W. Hey Esq. Sept. 7. [23] Michael Angelo Taylor Esq.

covering that the law clearly entitled him to a licence on paying the specified fee of 1*s.* or 6*d.*, he warmly exclaimed, that if such was the law then, it should not so continue. Accordingly he considered how best to introduce some discretionary power to magistrates, in the granting or withholding of dissenting ministers' licences. His purpose reached the ears of the Methodists and Dissenters of the city which he represented in parliament, and he soon found that if he should persist in his endeavour, it would be at the expense of his seat. His intention had perhaps been rather the effervescence of the moment, than the deliberate result of that consideration which so serious a subject might well require. He set himself therefore to devise how best to get out of the difficulty, and, through what medium I never heard, he actually prevailed on Mr. Pitt's government, indeed on Mr. Pitt himself, to adopt his measure. The precise nature of the regulations I cannot recollect with certainty, but I am positively sure, that they tended materially to restrict the freedom hitherto enjoyed by Protestant Dissenters, and a fine for the first offence, and imprisonment for the second, were the sanctions by which they were to be enforced. The intelligence that some such measure was about to be proposed to parliament, reached the ears of some of the dissenting ministers, from one of whom I believe it was that I received the first intimation of the design.

"I lost no time in conferring with Mr. Pitt on the subject, but he had been strongly biassed in favour of

the measure by Bishop Prettyman, on whom I urged in vain the serious consequences that must infallibly ensue. I well remember stating to him my firm persuasion, that within a few weeks after the passing of the intended law, several of the dissenting ministers throughout the kingdom, most distinguished for talents and popularity, would be in prison; and I urged on him, that even supposing them not to be actuated by a sense of duty, for which I myself gave them credit, or to be cheered by the idea of suffering for righteousness' sake, they would be more than compensated for all the evils of imprisonment by their augmented popularity. The Bishop, however, would not assent to my view of the case, and finding Mr. Pitt intended to bring the measure forward, I begged I might have a full confidential discussion of the subject. Accordingly we spent some hours together at a tête-à-tête supper, and I confess I never till then knew how deep a prejudice his mind had conceived against the class of clergy to whom he knew me to be attached.

"It was in vain that I mentioned to him Mr. Robinson of Leicester, Mr. Richardson of York, Mr. Milner of Hull, Mr. Atkinson of Leeds, and others of similar principles; his language was such as to imply that he thought ill of their moral character, and it clearly appeared that the prejudice arose out of the confidence he reposed in the Bishop of Lincoln. I remember proposing to him, to employ any friend whose mind should not already have received a bias on either side, to visit the several places I had mentioned, to inquire

into their characters, and to ascertain the principles and conduct of their adherents, adding my confident persuasion that both their moral and political principles would be found favourable to the peace and good order of society; indeed I went further, and alleged that they were in general friendly to his administration, from believing these to be promoted by its continuance. All however was of no avail, and all I could obtain from Mr. Pitt was an assurance that the measure should not be actually introduced without his giving me another opportunity of talking the matter over with him. Happily that opportunity never occurred; of course I was in no hurry to press for it; and the attempt never was resumed; but some years after, when Lord Sidmouth's memorable bill was in progress, which excited such an immense ferment and produced a vast number of petitions, by which it was defeated in the House of Lords, Lord Redesdale (formerly Sir John Mitford) stated, that he well remembered that during Mr. Pitt's administration a stronger than the bill then in progress had been in contemplation, and that he did not know why it had been dropped. I must say, considering every thing, I have always been extremely thankful for any share I had in preventing the introduction of this scheme." [24]

He was much "hurt," he tells Mrs. Hannah More this session,[25] at the defeat of another measure bearing upon the moral interests of the people. "Sir William Pulteney, who brought forward the bill to suppress

[24] MS. Mem. [25] To Mrs. Hannah More, April 25.

bull-baiting at the instance of some people in the country, (I declined because I am a common hack in such services, but I promised to move it if nobody else would,) argued it like a parish officer, and never once mentioned the cruelty. No summonses for attendance were sent about as is usual. In consequence not one Thornton, nor many others, were present, any more than myself. I had received from some county magistrates an account of barbarities practised in this generous pastime of Windham's, which would be surpassed only by the tortures of an Indian warrior. A Surrey magistrate told a friend of mine yesterday, that some people met for a boxing match, and the magistrates proceeding to separate them, they threw their hats into the air, and declaring Mr. Windham had defended boxing in parliament, called out, 'Windham and Liberty.' A strange and novel association, by the way! Canning, to do him justice, was ashamed of himself, and told me when I showed him the account of cruelties, (which Windham read coldly,) that he had no idea of the real nature of the practice he had been defending. Alas! alas! we bear about us multiplied plague spots, sure indicatives of a falling state."

"This last week," he says, May 4th, "a very hurrying one in parliament—little Scripture reading and retirement—wool business, consultations, &c. Worried about it from getting up to bed-time—and latish Houses. I ought to be thankful for being carried so well through. Poor G.'s scrape—hard

usage—the more felt because he not used to it. I am pretty well. The children with the hooping cough."[26]

"A letter from Rossie Castle," he writes at the same time to Mr. Ross, "finding me stewing in this crowded and dusty city in the middle of a delightful summer day, excites a natural longing for lakes, and mountains, and shady retreats, and other such luxuries of nature. But we have all our several posts, and, whether in town or country, 'the time is short,' and we have much to do in it."[27] The marriage of his sister, Mrs. Clarke, to Mr. Stephen, had recently occupied his thoughts. "I trust," he writes, "it will please God to bless the union. Stephen is an improved and improving character, one of those whom religion has transformed, and in whom it has triumphed by conquering some strong natural infirmities. He has talent, great sensibility, and generosity. My chief objection was, that it seemed like my sister's beginning life again, and going to sea once more in a crazy vessel. However, God is a God of mercy and loving-kindness, and Christ is a tender Master, ever ready to relieve and comfort us."[28]

West Indian matters too had engaged him much. The Abolition had not been proposed in parliament this session, because the "West Indians had talked of a compromise,"[29] by which he hoped to "be able to obtain a suspension of the Slave Trade for five or

[26] Diary, May 4. [27] To Hercules Ross Esq. May 6.
[28] To Miss Mary Bird, May 19. [29] Diary, Feb. 17.

seven years."[30] In this hope he was after much negociation disappointed. "I have suffered," he says, (June 6th,) "great chagrin on the subject of the Slave Trade. Pitt listened too easily to the assurance of several of the principal of the West Indian proprietors, who declared themselves willing to support a suspension for five years; till at length, when we hoped all was going on prosperously, a public meeting of the West Indian body, at which a strong anti-abolition spirit was manifested, shook the resolution of our timid converts, and all, except Sir William Young, turned round. I wished Pitt to come forward with the measure notwithstanding, and tried to prevail on Dundas to support us in it. But the latter, though extremely angry at the Jamaica people, who, in a report recently come over, talk big and dispute our right to abolish, &c. will not, I fear, consent to support us now. Lord Grenville is very earnest for laying a tax on all negroes imported into the islands, to be applied in the encouragement of population, but I am clear that the regulation would be futile. Negroes have risen in price from £76 to £120 per head, and yet they have been bought in greater numbers than ever, so that on the whole any tax would be of no avail. Pitt declares that he will, by an order of council, stop the importation of negroes into the new settlements, into which three-fourths, speaking loosely, of the whole importation have been brought."[31]

[30] Letter to Thomas Babington Esq. April 2.
[31] To the Rev. T. Gisborne, June 6.

Yet though this attempt at compromise had failed, he took a cheerful view of the prospects of the cause. "If you knew all I do," he tells Mr. Stephen, "you would think you saw the streaks of light indicating the opening day, and rewarding all our past sufferings, and elucidating the way of Heaven." These cheering anticipations were closely connected with a plan which he thus explains to one whom, from personal acquaintance with Napoleon, he thought able to assist materially in its accomplishment.

TO F. HARE NAYLOR ESQ.

"July 5.

"My dear Sir,

I have long had it in contemplation, whenever a negociation for peace should take place, to endeavour to effect through its means the general Abolition of the Slave Trade. All the powers which carry on that detested traffic, except Denmark, (which has agreed to abolish in 1800,) and America, (which has done it in part,) will be implicated in the negociation; and the grand argument used against us having been, that Great Britain's relinquishment of the Slave Trade would only be the surrendering of it to other countries, whereas if others would join us they would not object, our opponents on their own ground would be forced to give up the contest.

"Now I cannot doubt but that there would be on our part a willingness to meet half way any pro-

position for the Abolition of the Slave Trade; but I fear lest I should not be able to obtain an instruction to our diplomatic agent to make the proposal. You know what different opinions there are in the Cabinet on that subject. Would I were the starling to hollow 'Abolition' in the Grand Consul's ear. I think I remember your saying that the subject had attracted his notice; oh that he might be sensible of the opportunity Providence puts into his hands; it would be worth almost the endurance of all that is past to effect such an object. There would be the less reason against his bringing forward the proposition, because even granting, (what I utterly deny,) that on the most abstracted mercenary principles, the Slave Trade is profitable to a nation having West Indian colonies, the state of the French islands precludes their being contaminated with such bloody profit. This is a topic upon which I should have much to say in conversation, but I have thrown out enough, I hope and believe, to excite in your mind something of that warmth, which by the discussion I have generated in my own.

Believe me to be
very sincerely yours,
W. WILBERFORCE."

The war meantime proceeded; and men's eyes were fixed with changing hopes upon its various incidents. "Government," he writes, "have received an account indirectly, to which they give credit, but not implicitly

or very sanguinely, of the Austrians having gained a great victory in Suabia. This would be important. I am tired of war, and trust there will be an end of it in a few months."[32] But events soon wore a different aspect.

"July 1.

"My dear Muncaster,

How speedily are our prospects clouded! This capture of the Danish frigate is a very awkward business, and we must *succumb*, (to borrow the language which you have been lately used to,) or we shall be at war I fear with the three northern powers; and Buonaparte would desire no more. I rather fear this incident may prompt the Grand Consul to ask higher terms than he would otherwise have required, and thereby prevent a peace. With you I dread that event; strong as France must be for future attack, yet the continuance of the war would be still worse. I hear that the West Riding of Yorkshire is so pacific, that if a meeting should be called, ninety-nine out of a hundred would petition. The wool business and Pitt's demeanour (which last is still rankling) may in part have occasioned this, but it is what must be expected after so long a continuance of war.

"How I pant for Windermere and Derwent-water! What delight should I feel in carrying my dearest wife to that land of wonders and beauties! But I think I can turn my time to better account, and give up the idea. The hospitable hall of Muncaster forms a part of the

[32] To Lord Muncaster, June 7.

picture, which in my view of the lakes my imagination conjures up. Le tems viendra, I trust, when we shall have a session which will end in May. At the close of one I always feel as if I might have done much which has been neglected. Alas! alas! how little shall we be satisfied with our exertions, when we come to form an adequate idea of what has been done for us! But I must conclude. We have been some little time at Mr. Stephen's, close to the Thames, and have at least once every day gone upon the water. Mrs. Wilberforce, as well as myself, delights in it.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"My Yorkshire friends," he tells Lord Camden, "begin to be very impatient for peace. I trust this northern squall will not prevent the settling of the elements into that calm which is so desirable. Above all other things, it is to be wished that government should now carry the public along with them." "Though much pressed for time," he writes to Mr. Bankes,[33] "I will at least send you a few words to inform you (of course under that degree of secrecy which the nature of the case requires) that government have received despatches from Vienna, dated the 19th of June, when they accepted our subsidy of a million for keeping up an army of 200,000 men, and expressed their determination not to make peace without our being included. They had not, however, heard of

[33] July 4.

the defeat of Melas, though they knew of Buonaparte's having passed the Alps. How far the reverse they have experienced will change their resolutions, time must show. I can scarcely conceive Melas (who however had with him a confidential adviser) would have dared to make such a convention, if he had not been apprized of his court's willingness to make a great sacrifice as the price of peace.

"What is most important for your guidance and mine, is, that Pitt's language is just what we could wish, firm, but temperate. He is more sanguine than I am in his expectations, or rather in his opinions, that the Austrians *could* still drive Buonaparte out of the field, if they would exert themselves. But there seems a proper sense of the probable necessity of making peace, with a disposition to assume a firm aspect, in order to make it on tolerable terms. I believe he will still propose the subsidy, but of course take precautions against its being paid an hour before the time of the Austrians performing their part of the contract."

Summer was now far advanced, but the House was still sitting, and this long continuance of business greatly exhausted his strength. "I had serious thoughts," he says, July 23rd,[34] "of attending the assizes this summer, but parliamentary business is not yet quite at an end, and we have sat so late that I shall have but a short time for 'pruning my feathers and letting grow my wings.' In truth, both body and

[34] To Ralph Creyke Esq.

mind with me, and understanding too, call for a little quiet after the incessant turmoil and drudgery in which they have been engaged for six or seven months." "I feel myself a good deal shattered, and reminded of the necessity of more regularity and care than I have of late observed."[35] "I pant for a little quiet, and I think I feel a more than ordinary languor permanently; however the promises of the gospel fail not, yet whenever I look back upon the little I have hitherto done in life, I long to be more executive in what remains."[36] Upon the 22nd of August he was on his road into the country.

"Leatherhead, Aug. 22.

"My dear Muncaster,

My life has been one continual worry for some time past, and I quite pant for a little rest. I have been paying and receiving a few visits round the capital, though still a bankrupt in civilities; and we are now on our way to Bognor Rocks, that my wife and the children may breathe sea air, after repeated illnesses. In the beginning of October we design to move to Bath. A box full of unanswered letters accompanies me, but before I enter on the task of replying to them, I will break the long silence I have observed to you.

"I have been much amused at the idea of the Dr. in his full splendour, his tail spread, and his crest reared, and of the various sensations he must have

[35] To Samuel Smith Esq. Aug. 19. [36] To Henry Thornton Esq.

excited in your mind. I think you would hardly be so much imposed upon, as to conceive all the bluster quite to my taste. Yet there are many good qualities, great generosity, and frankness, (enough of that you'll say,) and disinterestedness, and real benevolence. An understanding only disparaged by affecting eloquence where plain speaking would have been preferable, but really acute and occasionally powerful expression. There is also a fund of unfeigned zeal for religion and morality. In short, were mankind in general such, it would be indeed a noisy world, but far happier than it is. All this is to your private ear, of course. You know his place of residence, and that I am often there. It is no more than justice to him to say that he is, taking all together, the best filler of a pulpit in that large circle. The political horizon is very gloomy, and we sadly deserve chastisement. This consideration lowers my spirits, yet Providence has been abundantly gracious to us, and we are not treated as we deserve.

"Every blessing attend you and yours. Remember the one thing needful, my kind friend, and believe me ever most truly yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Soon after his arrival he wrote to Hannah More.

"Bognor, Aug. 29.

"My dear Friend,

I am in a course of answering a box full of letters, which have long reproached me for my negli-

gence, but let me steal for awhile from them, and their comparatively uninteresting subjects, and refresh myself by a few minutes' intercourse with you. Indeed I am ashamed of not having sooner replied to your last very interesting report. But first a few words of my own proceedings.

"We spent three or four days with Lady Waldegrave, thence we came back to Broomfield to receive a visit or two, and at length, with no small difficulty, we got off with my budget at my back, and by slow but laborious journeys arrived at this quiet place on Saturday last. Henry joined us on Wednesday, and Mrs. Thornton and Mimy yesterday. So here we are reading and discussing, and through the mercy and overflowing goodness of God, enjoying ourselves not a little. We seem only too happy. It really shocks me to think that the flames of war still rage, and that there are multitudes who do not get off for an additional ten per cent. paid to the tax-gatherer, but who are subject to all its alarms, and dangers, and miseries. Oh be thankful that a gracious Providence has cast your part in pursuits so different. You are bold people to be thus flying at new game. Yet I give you so much credit for discretion, as to believe you would not be too adventurous, and without spirit nothing is to be done. I am really much obliged to you for your kind frankness in calling on me for my debt; I will send you £50 in a day or two, indeed I have taken measures for it immediately.

"Poor Mrs. Montagu is gone. It is an awful

migration! Our friends were indefatigably assiduous in their care of her. Our whole house joins in every kind remembrance to you, Lieutenant-General Patty, and the whole family. May God bless you, guide you, and keep you. It is the cordial wish and frequent prayer of your

affectionate and sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"What blessings," he says to Mr. Stephen,[37] "do we enjoy in this happy country! I am reading ancient history, and the pictures it exhibits of the vices and miseries of man, fill me with mixed emotions of indignation, horror, and gratitude; and when I look on the water, and consider that the sea only is interposed between me and France . . ! But I am much pressed for time, and have no leisure for lucubrations; so to business.

"You may remember obtaining from your friend an account of the great numbers of slaves which were imported into the new settlements. But this is intelligence of which we can make no use. Can you put me in the way of speedily getting any tolerably accurate account of the slaves which for two or three years back have been annually carried to those settlements. It is an argument to be pressed on those who are unassailable by higher principles, that the British ought not to invest much capital in colonies, which may probably have to be surrendered on the return of

[37] Aug. 25.

peace. It is requisite for urging this consideration, that we should have the account I desire. The custom-house returns with which Irving was furnished, would lead one to suppose, that not above one-eighth of the number stated by your friend had been imported. But the latter account is clearly right.. I earnestly beg you not to lose a moment in the commission; and as soon as you can report progress, whether it be information, or that no information can be procured, let me have a line from you."

"Since we have been here," Mr. Henry Thornton tells Mrs. H. More,[38] "we have been chiefly reading history, and talking with Wilberforce over many points, left short through the hurry of our London life." This rest in the bosom of his family and with the society of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thornton, was most refreshing to his spirit. "We are all," he says,[39] Sept. 11th, "I thank God pretty well, and living more quietly than common, to my no small satisfaction." But this repose was not to last long. "Perhaps," wrote Dr. Milner, (Sept. 19th,) "these wonderful smiles are for some future trial: continue to watch." This very letter found him in the deepest anxiety, which he thus imparted to Hannah More.

"Bognor, Sept. 27.

"My dear Friend,

I am unwilling you should learn from any other pen, that it has pleased God to visit my dearest Mrs.

[38] Oct. 1. [39] To Samuel Smith Esq.

Wilberforce with a very dangerous fever. I am told the final issue is not likely to be very speedy, but that from the violence of the outset, I have every reason for apprehension, though not for despair. But oh, my dear friend, what an unspeakable blessing to be able humbly to hope that to my poor wife, death would be a translation from a world of sin and sorrow, to a region of perfect holiness and never-ending happiness! How soothing also to reflect that her sufferings are not only allotted but even measured out by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, who loves her, I trust! aye, better than a dear child is loved by an earthly parent. I am sure you will all feel for me, and pray for me, and for my poor dear sufferer.

"Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thornton are all kindness and consideration for us. I am not sufficiently used to sick-beds, and it is extremely affecting to me to hear her wildness and delirious distresses, and sometimes fancies, mixed with her usual kind looks and gentle acquiescence. May we all be ready, and at length all meet in glory; meanwhile, watch and pray, be sober, be vigilant; strive to enter in, and assuredly we shall not be shut out. I had used to say such words as these, not I hope wholly without meaning; but how much more forcibly are they impressed on the mind by the near view of death to which I am brought! God bless you all. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with *us* all.

Yours always,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"You will I am sure," he tells another friend three days later, "hear with no little emotion, that it has pleased God to visit my dearest wife with a very dangerous fever. I had, I own, nearly dismissed all hope. But to-day matters wear a more favourable aspect, though Dr. Fraser, who is with us, (having most kindly hurried down on my first imperfect statement, which conveyed to his discernment the idea of no time being to be lost,) tells us not to be elated, but still to be prepared for the worst. What an unspeakable consolation and support is it in such a moment to entertain full confidence that my dearest wife has made her peace with God, and is not unprepared for the awful summons! I thank God, I am enabled to submit to His chastisement (too much, alas! deserved) without murmuring, and I humbly hope with resignation, I would say cheerfulness and gratitude, to His holy will. He best knows what is good for us; and if our sufferings here serve in any degree, by rousing us from sloth, and urging us to cleave to Him more closely, to increase the happiness of eternity, well may we exclaim in the triumphant language of the apostle, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"But I must stop. I am sure you will feel for us. The Dean and the Stephens are come, and the Henry Thorntons, who were with us, are all kindness and assiduity. What a blessing to have such

friends! Kindest remembrances. Under every circumstance,

I am yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. My dear wife has been delirious ever since we knew she was seized. How little could we have attended to her spiritual state if it had been before neglected, and we had wished to prepare for death! What a practical lesson to us all!"

"Wilberforce tells me," wrote his friend Henry Thornton to Hannah More, "that he has written to you a few lines on this distressing subject of Mrs. Wilberforce's illness. Poor fellow! he cleaves now to his old friends, and he finds a relief in employing a little time in writing to them, which is what we encourage, and especially as the sick-room is not the place either for him or for her. He seems more softened and melted than terrified or agonized, and shows the truly Christian character under this very severe and trying dispensation."

The issue of the fever was long doubtful, nor was it before the 14th of October, that he was able to thank God for any decided improvement. The tone of his own feelings throughout this painful time, shows the height to which he had attained in the school of Christ. Truly had he learned to take patiently the loving corrections of his heavenly Father. "Mr. Wilberforce," writes Mrs. Henry Thornton,[40] "has behaved *greatly*, if

[40] To Mrs. Hannah More.

one may so say of a Christian; he is now very calm, and waiting the eventwith much submission and quietness." "My mind, I thank God, is very composed. O Lord, take not Thy Holy Spirit from me: take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh; that under Thy chastisements, I may lift up to Thee a humble, reverential, and even thankful eye, and desire that Thy correction may work its due effect, and keep me closer to Thee for strength, and light, and warmth, and all things. Much affected and struck to-day in the address, Rev. iii. to the Laodicean lukewarm church, (too much my own condition,) with the words of kindness at the close—'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.'"[41] "I am much struck," he writes to a friend,[42] with whom he was soon after called to sympathize, "by this fresh visitation. Alas! we go on commonly in a course of too uniform and uninterrupted comfort. Read St. Paul's list of sufferings. Yet let us praise God, and extract good from present evil, and turn temporary suffering into everlasting happiness."

Carefully did he scrutinize his own spirit when the hand of God was taken from him, lest he should lose any of the blessing of affliction. "I have heard," he writes to Mr. Hey,[43] "of all your affectionate sympathy with me in my late heavy trial. God has in His chastisement remembered mercy; and my beloved wife is spared to me, and is gradually recovering her health and strength. May I improve from the

[41] Journal, Sept. 28. [42] To Thomas Babington Esq. [43] Oct. 20.

discipline through which I have gone; but it is truly melancholy and humiliating to observe, how the strong feelings of the mind in the moments of suffering decay and grow cold after it is over. This hardness of heart towards God, in spite of the uniform and unvarying dictates of the judgment, is a sad proof of corruption."

His stay at Bognor was not much prolonged. A scanty harvest had increased the general discontent; and parliament was summoned to meet for the despatch of business on the 11th of November; "ministry," he says,[44] "being, I fear, influenced not merely by the scarcity, but by a warlike disposition. My heart is sick at so much misery and sin, and when I consider what chastisement we deserve at God's hands on the one side, and contemplate the storms I see brewing on the other, I begin to tremble."

"I will follow your advice, and read Adam Smith again. I have already sent for him; meanwhile let me beg you to learn for me in your circle what was the produce of the last harvest compared with common years, and what quantity of grain was unconsumed when this year's stock came in. I shall endeavour to obtain similar information from different parts of England." These inquiries he now made in every quarter. "I wish you would give me your thoughts concerning the high prices of all the articles of life, and of the effects of forestalling, regrating, and monopolizing, &c. to which such a powerful operation

[44] To Thomas Babington Esq. Oct. 17.

is ascribed by many, I cannot think justly, but I would form no hasty opinion, and shall be glad to hear from intelligent friends in different places, and then draw my own conclusion."[45]

He was soon afterwards in London, earnestly endeavouring both in private and in the House of Commons to obtain some effectual relief for the sufferings of the working classes. "I have not," he tells Lord Muncaster,[46] "for one morning omitted to take my place at the committee, and that cuts such a solid lump out of the day as to leave the rest composed but of fragments." "Our first report is made; alas! it does not go far enough; I wish that we should gain the hearts of our people by declaring our determination to abridge our luxuries, and comforts, and superfluities, not merely our bread. This way of establishing a distinction between the poor and rich in times like these is neither prudent nor feeling. They compare our situation to that of a ship at short allowance; but then officers are at short allowance too, not the men only. The Duke of Portland's letter has kindled a flame, or rather a secret spark, which now perhaps is smothered, but will hereafter show itself by breaking out into a conflagration. . . . . Your friend Peter Porcupine is a red-hot Anti-Jacobin, most abusively loyal, and most uncharitably orthodox."[47]

"I have been using my utmost endeavours to impress the minds of ministers, and of my brother mem-

[45] To W. Hey Esq. Oct. 20.

[46] Dec. 6.

[47] To Mrs. Hannah More, Nov. 25.

bers, with a sense of the necessity of taking effectual steps for the relief of the lower orders: and though thinking their measures too weak, I am by far the most urgent in pressing forward those very weaker measures, to the execution of which they proceed languidly and lukewarmly. It is really beyond expression vexatious to experience such indifference. Though the House of Lords concurred with us on Friday, Nov. 28th, in addressing the King to issue the proclamation, it was not issued until Thursday last; and nothing is yet done in consequence of it, though I have been daily pressing the extreme urgency of our communicating the disposition to economize, like an electric shock, by the promptitude and force of our proceedings." [48] "All this wears an aspect of exhibiting a show to the country. But we should either do less or do better.

"The political horizon is sadly clouded in the north. No one will venture to predict what will happen, but there is reason to fear we shall have a conflict: all seem to agree that the assertion of the right of search is absolutely necessary to us as a maritime nation. Bayley's son is lately come from Petersburgh, and from his account nothing can exceed the folly of this same Paul. He is indebted for his continuance on the throne to the filial piety of his son. But if he is as wild in his vagaries as he has been, he will be presuming too far upon the servility of his grandees. Alas, my friend, Providence has not done

[48] To William Hey Esq. Dec. 6.

with us I fear! Not a word or a thought about God. We seem in general to recognise Him as little in His chastisements as in His mercies. How little does all seem, compared with His favour! May you and I, my dear friend, possess a share of it."[49]

A few days later he again applies earnestly to Mr. Hey for accurate intelligence upon the state of things in Leeds.[50] "I am assured by many of my northern friends that the distress of the manufacturing part of the West Riding has been much overstated to me, and that my ideas are more melancholy than its real condition warrants. I am very desirous of knowing the truth. This indefinite way of softening down and weakening the force of representations of distress and penury entirely takes off their effect—much more than it ought. Supposing the distress to be overstated, there may be much real misery. But such is the constitution of the human mind, that if persons are told that any set of men are in great distress; if particulars are specified, and some impression is made on their feelings—and then some one steps in and asserts that the facts are greatly exaggerated, and obtains credit to his assertion, all the impression on the hearer's feeling is done away.

"Suppose you were to desire some person on whose accuracy you can rely, to inquire into and actually inspect the state of the lower orders. What think you of its being said to me publicly in the committee by the first man in the country, on my stating the

[49] To Lord Muncaster, Dec. 6. [50] To W. Hey Esq. Dec. 10.

extreme importance of our endeavouring individually to introduce and diffuse agreements and resolutions, not concerning wheat flour and bread only, but also concerning oats, barley, &c. and on my adding that I knew one gentleman in Yorkshire who had resolved to brew no ale, and was striving to prevail on his neighbours to form the same resolution—'I am very sorry for it.' This was with no regard to the revenue, for that consideration had been expressly disclaimed; but from a belief that there was no necessity for going so far, that the pressure was not so great as I conceived. This last anecdote is for your private ear only, and I give it to whet your disposition to obtain for me accurate intelligence concerning the state of the lower orders."

The year closed upon him in these employments; and early in the following spring he tells Mrs. Hannah More that he still has on him "the heavy burthen of obtaining relief for our starving manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The callousness, the narrow and foolish wisdom of servilely acquiescing in Adam Smith's general principles, without allowance for a thousand circumstances which take the case out of the province of that very general principle to which they profess allegiance, is producing effects as mischievous as the most determined and studied cruelty. This is rather too strong, but not much. However, I must leave this topic or I shall never have done. I send you half a bank note for £50. I beg you, besides my ordinary debt, to regard me as your debtor

for any sum you may call for, on account of the peculiar distress of the present times. I thank God that I am able, without inconvenience, to make an extraordinary exertion; and as to keeping strictly within one's income at such a season as this, it is as unreasonable (not to say any thing of its wickedness) as it would be for a man to keep determinately to his ordinary rate of walking, when a hungry lioness was at his heels; but we feel for our own safety more than for others' sufferings.

"Mrs. Wilberforce, thank God, regains strength gradually. You hold out better than I expected; but the tenement gives indications (mine also) that it will ere long fall to pieces, and enforces on the spirit within, the duty of providing a surer and better habitation. Farewell, I am too much indulging my disposition to chat with you. Kindest remembrances.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Vid. page 10.

My own.—Political, Dec. 11, 1823.—French War.

I AM myself persuaded that the war with France, which lasted so many years and occasioned such an immense expense of blood and treasure, would never have taken place but from Mr. Dundas's influence with Mr. Pitt, and his persuasion that we should be able with ease and promptitude, at a small expense of money or men, to take the French West India islands, and to keep them when peace should be restored: in truth, but for Mr. Dundas's persuasion that the war would soon be over. Mr. Burke had formed a very different judgment; and when, being present with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, the latter exclaimed, "Well, Mr. Burke, we must go to war, for it will be a very short war," Mr. Burke replied, "You must indeed go to war, but you greatly mistake in thinking it will soon be over; it will be a very long war, and a very dangerous war, but it is unavoidable." The British minister had no intention whatever, at that time, of dispossessing France of any of her continental dominions, and as for conquering France, Mr. Fox himself could not more consider it as an utter impossibility than they did. They by no means shared in Mr. Burke's persuasions concerning the proper object and nature of the war.

Vid. page 24.

East India Clauses proposed by Mr. Wilberforce, A. D. 1793.

AND whereas such measures ought to be adopted for the interests and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, as may gradually tend to their advancement in useful knowledge, and to their religious and moral improvement;

Be it therefore further enacted, that the said Court of Directors shall be and are hereby empowered and required to appoint and send out, from time to time, a sufficient number of fit and proper persons for carrying into effect the purposes aforesaid, by acting as schoolmasters, missionaries, or otherwise; every such person, before he is so appointed or sent out, having produced to the said Court of Directors a satisfactory testimonial or certificate from the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Bishop of London, for the time being, or from the Society in London for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, or from the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, of his sufficiency for these purposes.

And be it further enacted, that the said Court of Directors are hereby empowered and required to give directions to the governments of the respective Presidencies in India, to settle the destination and to provide for the necessary and decent maintenance of the persons so to be sent out as aforesaid; and also to direct the said governments to consider of and adopt such other measures, according to their dis-

cretion, as may appear to them most conducive to the ends aforesaid.

Provided always, and be it further enacted, that if any person so sent out as aforesaid shall at any time prove to be of immoral life and conversation, or shall be grossly negligent or remiss in the discharge of the duties of the station to which he shall have been so appointed, or shall engage, directly or indirectly, in any trade whatsoever, or shall accept of and hold any office or employment, public or private, other than that to which he shall have been so appointed, the governments of the respective Presidencies shall be and they are hereby required to remove him from his employment, and send him back to Great Britain; and the act of government in so doing shall be final and conclusive, and shall not be examinable in any court of law whatsoever.

And that due means of religious worship and instruction may also be provided for all persons of the Protestant communion in the service or under the protection of the said Company; Be it enacted that the said Court of Directors shall be and are hereby empowered and required, from time to time, to send out and maintain in their several principal garrisons and factories a sufficient number and supply of fit and proper ministers; and also to take and maintain a chaplain on board every ship in the service or employment of the said Company being of the burthen of 700 tons or upwards: and that every charter-party to be entered into by the said Company for any ship of the burthen aforesaid, or any greater burthen, shall contain an express stipulation for the said Company to nominate and send on board such ship a chaplain for the purposes aforesaid, at their nomination and expense. Provided always, that no such minister or chaplain shall be so appointed or sent out until he shall first have been approved of by the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Bishop of London, for the time being.

Vid. page 185.

My own.—Political and Religious, March, 1827.

Among the various reasons for which our Saviour thought fit to forbid our judging each other, it was probably one, that we are most imperfect judges of the merit or demerit of the actions of others; still less can we estimate degrees of virtue or of vice, of the strength or weakness of the moral principle. Much depends on the force of the temptation to which we are subjected; and this force must obviously vary according to the different temperaments, characters, and principles of different individuals. That may be to one man a severe trial of the strength of the moral principle which to another would be none at all. One of the severest trials of the minor order, which I myself ever experienced, was on the occasion of General Fitzpatrick's motion for an Address to the Crown, in behalf of M. de La Fayette.

As the incident may have faded away from the memory of the present generation, or be lost in the multitude of the interesting occurrences of the last twenty years, it may be necessary to relate the circumstances which gave occasion for the motion in question. There is no man whose character has been painted in more different colours than that of M. de La Fayette; but it can scarcely be denied, that while many of the aspersions on his reputation owe their origin to rumour, and perhaps to party prejudice, his life exhibits many traits of a generous and patriotic spirit; not merely of an ardent love

of glory, but of a mind zealous for liberty. And when we consider his youth, his rank, his connexions, and the universal dissoluteness of morals and manners which then too commonly prevailed among the French nobility, it gave indication of a truly noble spirit, to quit the luxury and frivolity of a Court, and to plunge into the hardships, privations, and dangers of war in the cause, as he conceived, of an injured and oppressed people. Again, whatever may be reported of his behaviour to the royal family of France, whenever that is considered it should be remembered that he well knew they reposed no confidence in him, but that they suspected and hated him; while he knew but too surely that had they escaped out of France, which was their settled and but too natural purpose, it would have been declared by the demagogues to have been effected by his connivance. It is notorious, that when the wretches who excited and directed the popular fury at Paris, manifested unequivocally their purpose of destroying the King and Queen, he exposed himself to great personal obloquy and danger in their defence. Once he quitted the army and came to the bar of the Convention, endeavouring in vain to stem the torrent of popular fury; and he was endeavouring to prevail on his soldiers to march to Paris, to rescue the royal family from the extremity of danger and degradation, when the Convention, well knowing his purpose, sent commissioners to treat with the army, and to prevail on them to arrest their commander. In vain did M. de La Fayette endeavour to call forth a better feeling. He was but just able to effect his own escape, accompanied by a few of his officers, and protected by a small party of cavalry; intending to find a refuge in some neutral territory. Passing through the Prussian territory, he with his companions was arrested, and shortly afterwards lodged in the dungeons of the fortress of Olmutz. Madame de La Fayette, a member of one of the most ancient and noble families in France, petitioning to be permitted to cheer the desolateness of his imprisonment, her request was granted only on the condition that she herself should become equally a prisoner; a stipulation, which, though she willingly submitted to it, does not on that account reflect less dishonour on the government which required such an engagement.

His harsh and cruel imprisonment had now lasted for four years, when, this country being then in close alliance with Austria, it was hoped that the influence of the court of St. James's might be exerted for the humane purpose of prevailing on our confederate to release M. de La Fayette from his prison. Indeed the bitterness with which some of our leading politicians then publicly spoke of the leaders of the Revolutionary party, might not unnaturally cause it to be supposed that our court was implicated in the cruelty and disgrace of his unjust detention. All therefore who were anxious to exonerate their country from the imputation of participating in such unworthy counsels highly approved of General Fitzpatrick's Address; but it was supported by others on deeper and more general principles (broader grounds). Considering the mitigated spirit and practice of modern warfare as one of the most marked and truly admirable improvements effected by Christianity, even among those over whose personal character and conduct its principles have little or no influence, and knowing but too well how easily the spirit of hostility, and the pretence of retaliation, might lead to the universal prevalence of the ferocious principles (maxims) and practice of ancient warfare, they dreaded the first deviation of a professedly Christian court from the milder regimen of modern times. Many therefore who commonly took no part in politics, nay many who had been among the foremost in condemning the wickedness and cruelty of the Revolutionary party, took a lively concern in M. de La Fayette's fate, and were warmly interested in the success of General Fitzpatrick's motion: but it was opposed with extreme bitterness by Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham, who charged on M. de La Fayette the abundant harvest of crimes and miseries, of which they alleged he had sown the seeds. They argued therefore that his sufferings, however severe, were no more than the just retribution for his early offences. Others again who in no degree shared in these vindictive feelings, and who it is no more than common charity to suppose would have been glad to accede to the motion, were probably afraid of disgusting an ally, and thereby weakening a confederacy, which was not united by any very strong principles of cohesion. Not liking to take Mr. Bankes's ground, they therefore, and more especially Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, adopted a tone of ridicule;

for even then, though much less I think than now, we had begun to be a set of very merry legislators.

In proportion therefore to the degree in which little was to be said against the motion, it would be cried down by party violence. It was late in the day before I had an opportunity of delivering my sentiments, and when at last an opening did present itself, it was towards the close of the debate, when the patience of the House was exhausted, and when it was obvious that any one who should get up to defend the motion, especially any one not having the cry of a party to support him and the plea of sticking to a party to justify the part he should take, would experience a very sorry reception. It may be perhaps a confession, but I must frankly acknowledge, that the performance of an act of duty has seldom been set about at a greater cost of present feeling than by myself, when under these circumstances I rose, conscious that I should immediately draw on me the loud derision of a vast majority of a very full House of Commons. I was not deceived in my expectation; and a rather felicitous expression of Dundas's, that the motion was chiefly to owe its support to straggling humanity, (the effect of the words enforced by his peculiar tone and pronunciation,) produced a roar that has seldom been equalled. I am thankful that I was not weak enough to be deterred by foreseeing the consequences that were to ensue: but trifling as the occasion really was in the actual circumstances of the case, it was at the moment a severe trial of principle. . . . Transient as on reflection I must be conscious would be the feelings of the persons present, however strongly expressed, and little as I must have known I should permanently lose in reputation by the part I was about to take, it was nevertheless a great trial, &c. &c.

It is one of the many instances in which an attentive reader of the New Testament will have occasion to remark that it was written by an accurate observer of the nature and feelings of man, that so much stress is always laid upon the feeling of shame; and the strength of its influence on our nature is continually noticed, not only in the epithet, cruel, attached to mockings, and the trial put on a level with the greater sufferings that could be endured—but on many occasions in which it might have been expected that feelings of another sort would

be specified, shame is that which is mentioned. Thus of our blessed Saviour it is said, He endured the cross, despising the shame. (See also other passages.) "I am not ashamed of the gospel." "House of Onesiphorus, he was not ashamed of my chain." Another instance in which the word that is used deserves attention, is afforded by the word, able, as if no doubt could be entertained of willingness; e. g. "Christ is able to save to the uttermost." "Now to him that is able to keep you from falling," &c. &c.

Vid. page 199.

Reasons for delaying the publication of "Practical Christianity," &c.

Forncett, Dec. 6th, 1789.

For publishing (with name).	Contra.
1st. Some careless people alarmed, credit of my name, and general operation.	1, 2, 3, 4. I can now speak to my private friends, both of the careless and well-disposed, and even of the bishops.
2nd. Even to the careless whom I know, I can hardly open myself at least with sufficient plainness, in private.	A. The dread of an over-righteous man would deter people from co-operating with me for national reform.
3rd. The really well-disposed taught the difference between being almost and altogether Christians.	B. My influence with P. Chancellor, present and future, and other great men, even G. himself, would be lessened: few if any livings obtained: few great men would attend to my recommendations in all the ways wherein I have now influence: few private men, &c. I should be looked on as morose and uncharitable. Bishops would fear me.
4th. Things may be said to those in high stations, bishops, &c., which could hardly be personally said to them in private.	
5th. My way cleared of many difficulties by this explicit avowal of my sentiments; unjust conclusions will no longer	5th. I may effect this without such a publication by private conversation with friends, and by public declarations.

be drawn from my cheerfulness, or my not making religion the matter of frequent conversation.

6th. Perhaps an association of serious people produced, labouring for the national reform.

I resolve on the whole not to publish, but I may at my leisure write, and leave an injunction to publish if I die. Then much of the good may be done by the work, at least some of it, and none of the evil accrue.

Meanwhile let me remember to clear my way more, with due regard to preserving of influence, and to speak to friends of all sorts as plainly as I can safely; distribute proper books, &c.

6th. Such an association would not now do good; the times would not bear it—the courts of law would set their faces against it.

C. To publish in defence of religion not my particular province.

D. Were I to express all I think I should be deemed an enthusiast, and were I to withhold I might mislead. Form might be substituted in the place of religion.

E. My connexion with P. and my parliamentary situation put me into the capacity of doing much good in the private walks: I may carry bills of reform, I may get a bishop.

Vid. page 169.

Hints either for a new work on religion, or for some chapters supplementary to his work on "Practical Christianity."

My own.—Heads. Miscellaneous (religious). Oct. 8, 1824.

Much nominal Christianity is naturally to be expected in a country circumstanced as ours is, in which Christianity the established religion of a country, holding out prospects of temporal preferment and provision for all denominations. Many too indulgent, many too timid, many too much occupied, many too self-indulgent, [dilate each,] to scrutinize sufficiently even to have their assent given on grounds of intellectual conviction, much less sufficient to dispose them to prepare and measure out their degree of assent so as to adjust it to the precise point of their judgment and conscience.

This indeed foretold by our blessed Saviour in the parable of the sower. [Consider Sumner's remarks on this head.]

Such is the condition of human things: each has its advantages and disadvantages. So church establishments. They provide religious instruction for those who are too poor to pay for it for themselves. Besides, it is the disease of men's nature to be insensible of its existence, and still more of its virulence. Hence religion must be offered to men: must go in quest of them.

Again, From the nature of things it often happens that the religious principles of an establishment have been formed in the nation's best times, when men's minds more under the influence of religion; and those sound principles preserved uniform through successive generations, and the fluctuations

and mutabilities of human opinions and tastes. The evil necessarily is, that men led by various motives that influence human conduct to profess adherence to an Establishment of which the principles have little hold on their heart.—Besides, Christianity is of two kinds, external and internal, and the former may apparently exist in due decorum, while the latter, alas! is not to be found.

Hence a decent observance of moral duties, more especially of such as are of the negative sort, is deemed a necessary ingredient in a good character. But then the defective interior, —the false principle within,—betrays its spurious nature whenever the religious or moral duty does not happen to coincide with the world's standard of morality. And there are too often particular things which are tolerated, or are even popular, and particular Christian virtues and graces which are unpopular.

Meanwhile by a conventional courtesy, whenever the exterior conduct and manners are not contrary to the Christian model, or where, by a moral balancing of accounts by which a positive amount of any Christian grace is to be set against a defect in another particular, the character may pass muster—the interior is to be presumed to be all complete, or at least, if not complete in degree, to be right in kind: and by a too natural self-deception, men are led into granting to themselves the same indulgent measure which candour requires them to mete out to others.

By an easy transition, inasmuch as the due performance of the duties of life may be compendiously stated to be a summary of religious and moral character, an appropriate set of principles and practices is considered to belong to each profession and department in life: and it is held to be enough if a man discharge these virtual engagements to society with adequate punctuality: and there again, what it may be only candid to concede to others we too easily are seduced into admitting as a standard for ourselves. . . . Under head, Establishment's benefits, observe, that even dissenting sectaries themselves benefited by the Church Establishment party: by the necessity under which the supporters of each minister lie to maintain and educate him in some decent equality with the ministers of the Church; the principles also serve like the standard weight and measure in

the Exchequer, as a test to which all religious opinions must in some measure approximate.

But Christianity is a system of a far higher order; it requires that its throne should be set up in the heart, whence it should prompt and control all the various movements of the entire machine. Its very essence and being is the formation of a peculiar character.

Another great evil resulting from this natural habit of being satisfied with the exterior, is, that we fall into the practice of considering any real existence of the interior of religion as constituting a peculiarly eminent measure of moral excellence; as being more than the generality can be expected to attain. They may rest satisfied with a far inferior degree: and unhappily the abatement which we are insensibly, partly even from humility, led to admit, as from the imperfection of our nature to be expected in the completeness of our moral character, is admitted in the abatement of the purity and simplicity of its principle, of the main-spring or corner-stone of the machine or edifice: whereas there must be no such allowed deficiency there; and therefore Christ commands us to "be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect." We naturally say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And our Saviour suggests the reply, "With man it is impossible, but not with God." Here comes in the need of being born again of the Spirit. There is to be the formation of the new creature which St. Peter calls a divine nature. . . . Head, Establishments. From the existence too of an Establishment, orthodoxy, or holding right doctrines in their established mode and degree, becomes a ground for zeal, and for credit with others. And much room for self-deception here. . .

Suppose then a man eminent in his profession, and so far a benefactor to mankind; universally esteemed and admired, and not without a fair claim to esteem and admiration. The man has been in the habit of receiving marks of respect on all hands. How difficult must it be, even leaving out of our calculation the natural corruption of man, for such an one to feel himself a lost, and guilty, and helpless sinner, a slave to sin and Satan! To feel himself such, sufficiently to dispose him to come as a weary and heavy-laden sinner to the cross of Christ.

Besides,

Here another difficulty occurs. The morality of Christianity is so pure and elevated, that being a true Christian is become synonymous for leading a good life. Now the eminent professional man of whom we have been speaking is conscious that he is approaching to the term of his continuance in this world; consequently his life, be it good or bad, is already spent. On the principle of having so many talents committed to him, he has employed them diligently and creditably, and his account he considers as ready to be given in. Whatever therefore might have been to be wished, had he originally heard of the necessity of more attention to the doctrines of Christianity, and to the dispositions and affections of the heart, it is now too late he thinks for him to change the whole principle of the account. To use an every-day phrase—he is in for it, and the idea of beginning as it were to live his life over again appears to him utterly inadmissible. He has been in the habit also of taking his religious opinions upon trust; of adopting his religious principles from some writer or some living authority in whom he has been used to confide. He has very little acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and if he reads them at all, it is as a religious duty to be performed, but not for the purpose of inquiring into and ascertaining their nature and force. The consequence is, that he remains ignorant of the gracious offers that are made to him; destitute of the high and glorious privileges that are offered to his acceptance. He knows not the infinite mercy and inexhaustible love of his God and Saviour. Oh, how often have such characters made the heart of real Christians to bleed for them! How often have they drawn tears from their eyes!

Address to these various classes of people. Reason with them from the plain declarations of Scripture, and ask them if they can conceive that their state corresponds with the description given, and urge them on every ground of prudence or folly, of misery or happiness, to attend to your call.

A separate chapter may well be given to the case of those who do not even endeavour to find joy, or even peace, from religion, but who think it enough to be safe.

Friends' paper.

To be looked at every Sunday. Jan. 12, 1794.

S—— and Mrs. What books reading? To give them good ones—Walker's Sermons. Call on Mrs. S. and talk a little. Lend her Venn's last Sermon. Education of their children, to inquire about. Prayer, &c. Their coming some Sunday to Battersea Rise to hear Venn. Call often, and be kind.

The J——'s. Call and sound them on religion. Give them money to give away, &c.—Little presents.

Lord and Lady J. See them. Get at them through G. Discover what books reading.

S—— and Mrs. Call—Civility, &c. S——n to dinner with lawyers of the more decent sort. Countenance them with their relations. Query, Maclaurin for him?

J—— and G—— S——. More civil to.

Dr. and Mrs. W. Civility—Him to dinner, &c. Call on her, and find what books proper, and give them. Query, family prayer?

W. B——. Present to, and try and talk with her.

H. M. and R. B——. More civil to, and inquire.

A—— and Lady. Try degree of knowledge—Walker's Sermons. Get her friends.

Lady M——. Try to get her to give books to young ladies, &c.

Lady E——. Speak pretty openly, yet tenderly.

Lady A—— and Sir R. Has he read Doddridge? Be open to her, &c.

Mr. and Mrs. M——. Encourage to family prayer, &c.

Mrs. R. S—— and R. Kindness and attention. Hints to her, and showing that more within, if I durst let it out. Tell her my own story.

J. E——. Talk with, to give him favourable impressions of his brother's religion.

W——. Find occasions of conciliating.

S——. His illness.

G——. Honest appeal to Scripture, if admitted true.

V——. Try what he believes, and speak home truths.

On the necessity of making religious instruction a part of education.

My own.—Misc.—Oct. 14, 1825.

ANOTHER strong argument in proof of the urgent expediency of instructing our youth in the evidences of the Divine origin of Christianity arises out of the consideration, that all those who in our two Universities carry on the work of education are clergymen; and although the subjects on which they give their various lectures and their private instruction be not of a theological nature, yet there will be nothing contrary to Christian principles taught by those who themselves are chiefly devoted to the service of the Christian church; while there will be an universal influence of an ecclesiastical kind diffusing itself throughout all the intercourse of what may be called the head-quarters of our Established Church. And when the various branches of philosophy, and ethics, and the arts and sciences, and what may be termed the education of youth in general, shall be conducted by laymen; the moral atmosphere, if it may be so termed, will be altogether of a different nature.

Is not the conclusion to be drawn from this consideration in some measure confirmed by comparing the state of the higher orders of Scotland with those of England. Our bishoprics, deaneries, and great livings, afford sufficient inducements to our nobility, and much more to our affluent commoners, to train up their younger sons for the Church; and these associating on equal terms of social intercourse with

their elder brethren, a general respect for the ecclesiastical order is diffused throughout the highest classes of the community. From treating the professors of religion with respect they habitually contract a reverence for the principles which they profess, and even become better acquainted with them. In Scotland, on the contrary, the revenues of the ministers, though sufficient for the moderate wants of a clergy whose piety and attention to the duties of their profession obtain for them great personal respect, are not sufficient to tempt the higher orders to devote their children to the ministry (to the service of the Church). Therefore we should expect to find, and if I mistake not we do find, that though the bulk of the people, and more especially the lower orders, in Scotland, are much more under the influence of religious principle, and have more reverence for its forms, than the same classes in this country, yet in the instance of the higher orders the case is not only different but is reversed.

Inquiries concerning the Slave Trade. Letter from William Wilberforce Esq. to Zachary Macaulay Esq. Governor of Sierra Leone.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE TO ZACHARY MACAULAY ESQ.

Aug. 23, 1793.

THE perusal of your long letter has impressed on my mind with increased force the persuasion that your situation affords you the opportunity of rendering the most important services to what I will call our common cause, the Abolition of the Slave Trade, by collecting evidence for the House of Lords. In spite of all that has been written and said on the subject there are still many sufficiently prejudiced, or ignorant, or inconsiderate, to maintain that all we have asserted concerning the effects of the Slave Trade on the state of Africa is mere rant and rhapsody, and that in reality it has rather a beneficial than an injurious influence, by preventing human sacrifice, &c. &c. If we could bring before the Upper House such "damning proof" to the contrary that no honest man could resist the force of it, I have no doubt whatever of our being able to carry our question there; and not only so, but I believe it would not be difficult, or at least impossible, to obtain considerable assist-

ance out of the public purse for repairing in some degree the wrongs of Africa, and promoting the civilization and instruction of that desolate country. This must of course not be talked of: I only throw it out because I have some notion from a recollection of your sentiments that your conviction of the facility of smuggling negroes into the West India islands has led you rather to undervalue a British act of parliament prohibiting the Trade in Slaves.

You are so well acquainted with the whole of the subject that it is needless for me to enumerate the propositions I wish to establish, and consequently the points to which your attention should be chiefly directed: every thing is comprehended which tends to prove that the Slave Trade has obstructed and continues to obstruct or retard the civilization and improvement of the natives of Africa, or that it is productive of misery, cruelty, or wickedness: every thing again which refutes the assertions of our opponents that the Africans are an inferior species; that they are incapable of civilization, either from intellectual or moral defects; that the Slaves are only prisoners, who would otherwise be massacred—taken in wars, which the Slave Trade rather prevents than causes, or victims redeemed from their superstition, or convicts justly condemned, &c.; that kidnapping and village-breaking are not only imaginary, but impossible; that justice is no where more fairly administered; that could even the natives be in some degree civilized, it would be impossible to institute with them any thing like a commerce unstained with blood, partly on account of their insuperable indolence, partly because of the want of navigable rivers, the high surfs, the sterility of the soil, the insalubrity of the climate, &c. &c. But I am running on unnecessarily, and will forbear; your own understanding will suggest to you on consideration, how it will be best to proceed for the attainment of the end I have in view. I have not yet thoroughly revolved the subject, but I design so to do, and to talk it over with some intelligent friends; meanwhile, I will drop one or two hints—they would I dare say occur to you, but it will only be the trouble of dictating them thrown away.

First, it seems to me advisable that Mr. Dawes, Mr. Watt, Mr. Horne, or any other gentlemen you should deem proper, should be furnished with a clue to direct their inquiries, and be desired to search out for information, wherever it is most likely to be procured. (Could any of the Blacks be safely employed in such a commission?) What any one learns should be communicated to the others, and when any one is coming to England qualified to give evidence at the bar of the House of Lords, he ought to be made acquainted before his departure with the intelligence that may have been obtained: indeed the object is so important that I should not hesitate to say it would be worth while to send over a person to Africa, in order to bring back the intelligence you might have collected, if no suitable one were coming from the settlement. I am rather afraid Mr. Horne will have left Sierra Leone before this letter reaches you; if not, I cannot doubt of his gladly lending himself to this scheme to the utmost of his power. Parliament will I suppose sit from January to June next, and in any part of that time we could be able I think to bring forward our witness; but for many reasons, I should prefer the middle to the earlier part of that period. For obvious reasons, the less I am seen in this business the better; and particularly it would be desirable, that the person who should give evidence should be able to declare he had not known it was collecting at my desire.

It is superfluous to state to you the proper constituents of a good witness, of which clearness, temper, and presence of mind are certainly the chief: however where these requisites are not to be found so abundant as we could wish, a witness may still be valuable. Could young Naimbana be fitted for the task, his colour in some respects would be advantageous; or could you find any one sufficiently intelligent and accurate amongst the settlers. Perhaps even some of those who had been concerned in some of the nefarious transactions might be willing to satisfy their consciences by accusing others, if assured that their own enormities should not be brought into question: Graham for instance might relate Calker's ravages if promised he should not be asked of those of

Cleaveland:—you will understand me not to mean to give an opinion, but only an illustration of my meaning.

Your story of the poor man whose child had been killed by the bursting of the shell, is an example of true magnanimity, and involves many important inferences. I should really be glad to have it authenticated, if in no other way, (which however I conceive not difficult,) by its being sent over attested on oath. I cannot help being unreasonably impatient for your establishing an intercourse with the interior country, and diffusing as deeply and widely as possible the knowledge of your settlement, and of your readiness to treat with kindness any persons, whether children or adults, who are sent to you for instruction. Could you not spare any proper man amongst the surgeons who might be disposed to undertake a journey up the country? I have understood a white man may travel securely in Africa under the convoy of a Mahomedan or other priest; and no qualification renders a stranger more acceptable in a barbarous country than medical skill.

Great prudence however may be requisite to avoid awakening the jealousy and to elude the vigilance of the slave dealers, particularly the European, or coast factors. The principle of cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator, ought also to be adverted to. This topic, and the important one of discovering if possible some valuable drugs, dyes, spices, &c. were suggested in a letter to the council about two months ago; there is no way wherein we might rise into more eclat and arrive at more solid advantages than this last, and I shall press it very strongly on Mr. Buckle, whom I expect to see before his departure. You must neither smile nor be angry at my issuing these directions from the quiet and security of my country study: I am fully aware of all the difficulties and dangers which may attend the execution of them: but as it is your part to act, so it is ours to speculate, and therefore without reserve I will communicate whatever may be likely to be in the smallest degree useful.

P. S. I shall send a duplicate of this letter by another ship. Pray tell Mr. Dawes that a very worthy young man is going out chaplain to second Mr. Johnson's efforts in New South Wales. Could you not multiply bees almost to any quantity at Sierra Leone? I think it was at some Moravian settlement I remember hearing that great profits had been derived from the industry of these *free labourers*. Were honey sufficiently plentiful, sugar might be made from it.

The following queries were sent by Mr. Wilberforce in January, 1796, to a large circle of private friends; and the information which he thus acquired, afforded the ground-work of his efforts for the relief of the poor during the years of scarcity which followed.

1. WHAT mode of supplying the necessities of the poor during the present scarcity has been pursued in your part of the country?

2. What is now the actual rate of common labourers' wages?

3. What is the ordinary proportion of common manufacturers' wages to those of common labourers? and how far has the former affected the latter?

4. Has there been any and what rise in the wages of labour* both summer and winter for the twenty or thirty years preceding 1794-5? and if any, at what periods and in what degrees has it taken place?

5. Have you known in fact unequal prices of labour in places near to each other, which may be supposed to have resulted from the operation of the poor laws?

6. What rise in the price of the necessaries and principal conveniences of life has taken place during the same period, distinguishing each article as particularly as may be?

* By "labour" and "labourers" is meant agricultural labour, or any other species of work wherein no skill.

7. Is task-work common in your part of the country, and how much can a man earn per day or week in this way?

8. What appears to you to have been the effect in point of population of increasing the size of farms and enclosing commons, and has the quantity of land in tillage been thereby so much diminished as that notwithstanding the improvement of what has continued in tillage the quantity of grain produced has been less than before?

9. Has the practice of engrossing small farms prevailed within your knowledge, and if so, with what effects has it been attended?

10. What were the habits of living amongst the labouring classes twenty or thirty years ago, and what are they now? Do they now live harder than they did then, or than they did at some intervening period?

11. Did the poor twenty or thirty years ago use meat and beer more or much more than they did till the commencement of the present scarcity?

12. Do potatoes constitute about you a material part of the food of the labouring class?

13. Do the poor in general appear tolerably contented with their situation, or otherwise?

14. What proportion and descriptions of the labouring class, when not disabled by age, sickness, &c. receive parish relief, how often and how long?

15. Have the poor rates been progressively increasing for some years past, and if so, in what sums, and in what proportions?

16. Does any, and what proportion of the labouring poor about you belong to Friendly Societies, Box Clubs, and what appear to you to have been the effects of these institutions?

17. Were the common labourers' wages sufficient to maintain a man and his wife, and four or five children, before the commencement of the present scarcity?

18. Have the ale-houses increased in your part of the country within the last thirty years, and in what degree, and what has been the effect of such increase?

19. Do the morals of the lower orders appear to you to have improved, or to have grown worse, within the last twenty or thirty years? Are they more or less frequent in their attendance on public worship?

20. What proportion of the children of the poor may be supposed to have no schooling, and have they more or less of it than formerly?

21. Would it be politic to hold out additional encouragements to the growth of wheat? And if so, what encouragements?

22. Would it not be politic to encourage the use of oxen in agriculture, draught, &c. in place of that of horses?

23. Have cottages in general less land about them than formerly? And if so, what have been the effects on the comfort and morals of their inhabitants?

Vid. page 236.

RIGHT HON. GEORGE ROSE TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE ESQ.

1797.

I CAN judge of your feelings, my dear Wilberforce, on your receiving the account of poor Eliot's death, by my own. Mr. Pitt has I am sure mentioned the event to *you*, if he found himself able to write to any body, because he told me he would. It was certainly sudden, as Mr. Pitt last night said the latest information was extremely favourable, and Mr. C———, who returned to town this morning, says the prospect was most encouraging.

The effect produced on Mr. Pitt was, as you may imagine, beyond description; it has not happened to me to be a witness of such a one, as I saw him immediately after his getting Lord Eliot's letter by the common post, and reading it among others, not knowing the writing; it is difficult even to conceive the impression made by the misfortune, and the manner of hearing of it. To say that from the bottom of my heart I lament the loss, is poorly expressing what I feel; I can say truly that in my intercourse with men I have met with few, very few indeed, such as our poor friend was. The poor little girl was with her father, so was John Eliot; William is at Trentham.

This blow, one of the very severest that could have been inflicted, Mr. Pitt has to bear up against at the moment of the rupture at Lisle; the circumstances attending which I am sure will convince you that on our part it was unavoidable, because I know I have the good fortune to agree with you on that subject. I suppose Lord Malmesbury is arrived, or will be here this afternoon. * * *

Vid. page 236.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE ESQ. TO MRS. WILBERFORCE.

Bath, Sept. 26, 1797.

My dearest Mother,

I SCARCE know how it is, but there is no place in which I find more full employment for myself than at Bath: but this ought not to prevent my occasionally sending you a few lines to inform you of our goings-on, and to assure you of our affectionate remembrance. Bath is now empty as it is called, but in this its state of emptiness it contains quite people enough to keep our knocker in exercise, and our tempers too; for there are few things more trying than to be interrupted by common visitors when engaged in any real business, or even in any pleasant relaxation.

You have heard of our proceedings on the road. The subject which, in addressing you no less than any to whom it might seem more properly to belong, will enforce its claim to be first mentioned, is the death of my excellent friend Eliot. I believe you and Sally may have heard (Milner well knows, who attended him with the same tender solicitude with which he always visits the sick and the afflicted) that he had a very alarming complaint; but it was imagined he was better, and he had even ideas of joining a regiment of Fencibles, into which he had entered from motives of patriotism, and greatly against the grain so far as comfort went. I have heard no particulars, all I know is, that he was carried off suddenly; but I have the satisfaction of knowing

also, that his mind was in that state which one should have wished, had one been aware of the awful change which awaited him. I heard from him but a short time before his death, and his letter breathed a spirit of the truest Christian resignation and piety. To me the loss is very great. I was in the habit of consulting him on all occasions, and we were engaged in a multitude of pursuits together. Well, he I trust is happy, and he is not improbably taken away from much suffering and sorrow. Do tell Milner about him.

I trust my dear mother rather gains than loses ground; I need hardly say that I remember you daily in my prayers. May you, my dearest mother, learn to be at the same time conscious of your own demerits as a sinner, and of the mercy and love of God, who holds out promises of pardon and acceptance to all penitent believers in Christ. May you learn more habitually to look to the Holy Spirit of God for all necessary supplies of grace and consolation; for a more melting penitence; for a strengthened faith; for a more animated hope; and a more perfect love and acquiescence in the Divine will concerning you. May you be enabled, my dearest mother, more constantly to retain a practical impression of that which we all believe and know, and that the daily trials to which we are subjected, be they greater or smaller, do not happen to us by chance, but that they, as well as more important events, are the ordinations of that gracious Being, who does not willingly afflict the children of men, and who has promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him. Thus, while your outward man decays, may your inward man be renewed day by day; and may your present sufferings, though while they last wearisome and grievous, serve to minister to you in the end, a more abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God. I make no apologies for writing to you in this style, because I am persuaded that you prefer it to any other. Alas! It is much easier to advise others, than to put in practice our own advice.

I hope my dearest Barbara and I are both deriving benefit from the waters; though slowly, and by grains. We were able to pass the first few days of our being here, by ourselves,

before we were unbagged, and I scarce need say, that it was quite a luxurious tranquillity. Parliament I believe will meet about the 2nd of Nov. You will *regret* the issue of the negociation. My dear Barbara is endeavouring to be useful here in the school way, as we shall probably often visit the place. Farewell, my dearest mother. Give my kindest remembrances to Sally, Mary Bird, Milner, and other friends; and believe me,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Vid. page 279.

RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE ESQ.

(Private.) Downing Street.
Saturday, 5th May, 7, P. M.

My dear Wilberforce,

The most pressing point on which I wished to speak to you, was the propriety of taking some step in the House of Commons respecting Fox's speech at the Whig Club. There is a very general indignation against it, and I fear we shall seem wanting to ourselves if nothing is done. At the same time there is a good deal of difficulty in arranging any proceeding. To prosecute the printer, unless Fox disavows the speech, would be unbecoming. If he avows it, he is clearly a just object of prosecution himself; but with a Westminster jury, and an inflammatory speech from him *versus* the Attorney-General, he would have a chance both of an acquittal and a triumph.

The best mode upon the whole (if something must be done) seems to be to order him to attend. If he then disavows the substance of the speech, to address the King to prosecute the printer, (which after his disavowal or retraction would succeed,) and if he avows it, to direct the Speaker to reprimand him. He will then probably call an extra Whig Club, and appeal to them against the House of Commons; in that case he ought naturally to be expelled; but we should in that case have a

Westminster election, which would be a punishment on ourselves and all peaceable householders rather than on him. Instead of expelling, we might send him to the Tower for the remainder of the session, which though doing little in fact, would assert enough the authority of the House.

The chief objections to this last measure are, that *weak and moderate* men might call it severe and vindictive, and that at the end of three weeks he might be led home in procession, and have the glory of breaking windows. I have thought it would save you time to write this hasty state of my case, rather than give you the trouble of calling here. I should like to hear from you on the subject this evening, or in the course of to-morrow, as (if any thing is to be done) I must have a meeting of some of our friends on Monday. If you think you can conveniently write from Clapham this evening, the messenger will attend you. My other two points can wait a little. One was, "*De Summâ Rerum*," as to Europe. The other as to the effect of the tax on exports and imports in Yorkshire.

Yours ever,

W. P.

Vid. page 338.

Sunday Newspapers.

LET the people know that these advocates of theirs are in fact injuring and enslaving them, and under the false pretext of giving them a new enjoyment, they are about to rob them of the best pleasures they can enjoy. It is always so when you propose to gratify the momentary appetite by encouraging the breach of moral rules. It is thus that the grand seducer flatters men that he is freeing them from the bondage of religion, when he is enslaving them in the fetters of vice.

Labourers will get no more for working seven days than six.

You are altogether ignorant of human nature and of life, if you know not that the poor man's best Sunday enjoyment is in the offices of religion: granting that you are too enlightened or refined for this superstitious and gross mummery, yet leave the poor man under a delusion which adds to his happiness, and is at least not contrary to the public welfare.

On what principle can you stop other artisans if you tolerate these?

You profess yourselves advocates for instructing the lower orders; but how many would have remained unlettered but for Sunday schools, which dependent on cessation of ordinary labour on sabbath!

Some friendly to good order, &c. think to promote it by the moral lessons of a Sunday paper; but how short-sighted are these men, even though sincere!

In a free country men will be interested about politics, and I should wish them to be so in moderation; but that incessant craving after political intelligence, which is still clamorous and never satiated, tends more than almost any other temper to render men factious citizens, and discontented and unhappy. .... Parisian custom emulated of mounting on a pedestal and preaching politics instead of religion. Many parts of religion are only between God and a man's own soul. But the sabbath requires the concurrence and support of civil laws.

Sunday newspapers more pregnant mischiefs than any other sabbath profanation, because besides their own breach they tend to produce the same in all the readers; and though the reading a paper may be thought less than ordinary labour, yet the former produces more alienation both of understanding and heart than the latter.

A farce that these Sunday newspapers the enjoyments of the poor. The poor would find sufficient gratification in a week-day's or Saturday's weekly paper. It is to pamper the sickly appetite of the rich, and to add a new pleasure to the multitudes they now enjoy, that this species of amusement is devised; and justly may it be said to aggravate the crime, that they who enjoy so many comforts yet think it much to be deprived of one expedient by which they might create a diversion as it were from religion, and more effectually succeed in turning away their thoughts from the grateful consideration and service of the Author of all their enjoyments. The rich are here to have the pleasure, the poor are only to suffer the mischief—a most unequal division. But even this statement false, for on none more than the rich or great will the ruin flowing from these evils ultimately fall.

Reward offered by Persian monarch to him who would discover a new pleasure. But are we so circumscribed in our choice? Have we run the round so completely? Are politics

so necessary to the comfort of every hour? Much pleasanter topics of speculation offered to us, and superior pleasures to that we would abridge.

Institution of the Sunday connected with the preservation of religion, of social or political and moral order.

Prove that decay of religion portends ruin of the state.

We wish not to stretch the laws beyond their ancient limits, though this would be highly advisable, but only to render effectual the law at present existing.

All the ablest writers and profoundest politicians on our side. Rome, above all others, is justly stated to have been preserved and destroyed by observance and neglect of religious institutions.

Example of France lately in abolishing the Sunday as the surest way of extirpating religion.

Vid. page 181, 318, &c.

The following remarks, dictated by Mr. Wilberforce about the year 1798-1800, are taken indiscriminately from a miscellaneous note-book of that period.

On the conduct of opposition about the years 1796-8.

If the system of repressing Jacobinism at home be condemned, it is you, the fomenters of faction, who by encouraging and countenancing men avowedly disaffected to King and country have rendered the two bills necessary—the Habeas Corpus suspension, &c. As well might the invaders of the property of others complain of those infringements on the liberty of the subject, which are rendered indispensable by the enormity of their aggressions. Remember the Maidstone trials; remember the declarations made in France concerning the friends they had in England. The hope of co-operation excited by the factious language of opposition (vide theatre and play story, mentioned by Gifford, when Grey was introduced) was not a little instrumental in bringing on the war.

I contend not for the truth or reasonableness of these declarations, but only I contend that the conduct must have been ambiguous which was liable to such a construction. Surely it is strange that they who assert that they were eminently the friends of the country, and the enemies of the system of licentiousness, which, under the sacred and abused name of liberty, has tormented the world in our days, should be so misunder-

stood by those who .. that with advantage which belongs to by-standers speculating on the conduct of our political parties, and being deeply interested to form right judgments, being also unlikely to wish to calumniate them, or to create an impression to their disadvantage .. yet drew this inference from their conduct, that they were the friends of French liberty.

This, by wearing the appearance of sarcasm and personal application, may have less effect than, if it could be related in all the nakedness of abstraction. Fairly ask yourselves, and seriously weigh the force of the argument in your closet; what would be the presumption concerning that line of conduct respecting which such a sentiment had been taken up? How would it strike you in any other case of a parallel nature? What would be thought of that advocate, who by his language and measures should excite an idea in the mind of the opponents of his client, that he was really friendly to their cause? What of that soldier, who should produce such a persuasion in the mind of the hostile army? And why is that reasoning which in these other instances is so natural and obvious—why is it here only to be thought uncandid and illiberal? Why only in the case where one would think there is least room for ambiguity, because it is not a single particular or two from which the judgment is to be formed, but from the infinite variety of innumerable speeches, and the decisive testimony of a long series of political measures.

Let me not be mistaken, I impute not any such dispositions. I am in the habit of saying what I think in the House; a habit I shall continue however blamed for it. I do not believe this disposition has existed; but what I do believe is, that had these gentlemen designed to injure their country, to foment new factions, to encourage and enhearten her enemies, they would have spoken and acted, and abstained from speaking and acting, as they have done. This is drawn from me by force, when I hear these gentlemen talking of each other as if they were the only patriots. I would say to them, Be comforted. The world would not be dark though these luminaries were no more, &c.

On treating with France. From the same.

ADMINISTRATION may justly claim that we should give them credit for readiness to treat, in consequence of their persevering at Paris, in spite of repulse at Basle; and at Lisle, in spite of Paris .... in violence to natural pride, and in defiance of charges of meanness and pusillanimity made even by their own party .... If any disinclination now, you should impute it to just diffidence in the stability of the new French government; or of its sincerity in offering negociation, or its good faith in keeping any treaty it should make .... On the very first annunciation of the Constitution of 1795, government hailed the first streaks of light which relieved the chaotic darkness which had so long prevailed, declaring that if the day should advance, and this so welcome dawn should not turn out a delusive meteor, they would gladly treat. The Constitution was established, and Wickham sounded at Basle, &c.

* * * * * * *

A republic as such, extensive and powerful, abundant in population, resources, &c. with a popular assembly governing, —my grand object of terror. Because republics, in their very nature, are restless, turbulent, warlike. Their governors often compelled, for their own purposes of ambition or security, for the opportunity of gaining reputation and influence, to plunge them in foreign wars.

Mankind are often rendered consistent by consciousness of what is due to their character, by sense of shame, &c. by previous declarations; but in republics *defendit numerus*. There is no personal consciousness, consequently no shame or remorse, each keeps the other in countenance; the guilt or shame is so divided that each man's share is as nothing.

In all our intercourse with republics this should ever be kept in mind, or we do not discharge our duty to our country or to ourselves. For what is it to have to deal with men void of conscience and of shame? In whom, from the peculiar circumstance of their situation, you have not that common guard against injustice, oppression, perfidy, and rapine, which for the comfort, no less than the protection, of our species, Providence has provided by the feelings of remorse and shame, a gnawing conscience and a wounded character; by that consciousness which the most hardened wickedness can hardly lull asleep; by that fearful apprehension of future account, that stinging sense of tarnished reputation, and a name and a fame which meets in every countenance condemnation and reproach, the frown of anger, or the averted glances of disdain, which they have devised a way of eluding by contriving to escape from personal consciousness by infinitely subdividing responsibility, and providing against reproach by having a little world of their own—being surrounded with their own atmosphere, &c. &c.

Vid. page 356.

Reasons for and against a negociation with France in the year 1800.

You have no business to inquire who wields the sceptre in France, or what the governing power. Whatever it is which manifestly and confessedly is at the head of affairs, acknowledge that as a matter of fact, treat with it as such, and do not persist in suspending the termination of the war upon the uncertain contingency of a settled government being established in France, which may be to prolong the war for years to come.

Answ. We should not consent to treat, unless we honestly mean to make peace if we can agree upon terms. [The gentlemen who talk of its being so easy to treat seem to forget this, and perhaps the secret of this case is their accustoming themselves to advise in a loose, off-hand way, when they should consider themselves as gravely counselling; and compromising their country's interests and character. They who are apt to contract engagements lightly, are apt not to be very scrupulous in fulfilling them.]

Surely it concerns us to know that the party from which the offer comes, is, 1. really authorized to negociate on the part of the foreign kingdom: 2. that it *can* perform: 3. that it probably *will* perform its stipulations.

Even the first condition may properly be specified in an age wherein it has been affirmed, and has not been very satisfactorily contradicted, that such a thing has happened [as an individual's taking upon himself to appear, by his agent, in

foreign negociations as the representative of his country, as acting on the part of the state, although certainly not acknowledged or suspected at home to have any share in the management of its concerns, or any portion of political power.

2. Buonaparte's bad character should no more prevent your treating with him, than with Louis XIV. &c. &c.

Answ. In neither case should we trust to the truth or honour of the individual, any further than as we may reasonably presume he himself will be governed by truth or honour from a principle of interest. The reason why Buonaparte's character weighs against treating with him, is that you cannot calculate upon his interest, or rather his view of his interest, in the same manner as you can on that of other monarchs.

3. It is Buonaparte's interest to make peace, and keep it.

Answ. With some of the allies granted, but probably not with all of them.

4. Buonaparte would probably grant us favourable terms.

Answ. This is very doubtful if you take into account, as you reasonably ought, what we may recover in another campaign. Also, 2. Buonaparte having no attached party, and depending chiefly on the credit he is to get by making peace, this will operate against his giving us good terms. Every concession he makes will be so far a diminution of credit, and may be turned against him as being what is sacrificed to his baseless authority. But, 3. It is not a little difference in terms that weighs with me; my great concern is to finish this war, if possible, without having to dread the immeasurable evils to be apprehended if a power exists in such a country as France, likely to impart, cherish, and aid the revolutionary, democratic, republican tendencies in other countries.

5. War is uncertain disunion of allies sure from experience.

Answ. I wish our allies were more to be depended upon,

were more simple in their views, more disinterested in their motives, more faithful in performing their engagements. Yet such as they are, it is infinitely important to us to retain them, and a satisfaction to think that our true interest and theirs are the same. Admitting all that can be said against our allies, we have derived great benefits from their co-operation. But remember all we say is that under all circumstances we do not interfere to advise the Crown to treat *now* contrary to the judgment of ministry.

H. T.'s* two general reasons against negociating *now* are just.

1. Such a peace could not be expected now from Buonaparte, in point either of terms, or of security, as deserves acceptance when compared with the more secure peace we may hope for from even a short continuance of the war; partly by lessening French possessions; partly by overthrowing the present consulship, and giving rise to a better government under better auspices.

2. Merely consenting to treat would probably dissolve the alliance. France would certainly gain time, and Buonaparte credit. Buonaparte's known policy is to divide his enemies by negociating, neither adhering to engagements made, nor being moderate in terms offered with remaining enemies.

* Henry Thornton.

From a note book entitled "Private Political Miscellanies," written about 1801.

Vindication of my own principles and political conduct. Hard and difficult case of a private member of parliament in times of war and violent opposition.

My opinions and principles have been, that we shall not be safe unless we should wisely use the interval of peace—vide my book, where I regret the decay of public spirit, and broadly declare the dangerous disease which is preying on our vitals. But still more, I may appeal to the time when in 1795 I argued for treating. I fairly avowed that I could not believe peace with France, without a thorough counter-revolution, could then or ever give peace—advantage was taken of my concession against myself. He acknowledges, my opponents said, peace will not give security, &c. I have long thought that the bulk of our nation had no adequate idea of the danger; nay, on the debate on the peace of Amiens, while I maintained that continuing the war would only make bad worse, I yet declared that I perfectly concurred with Windham as to the real and great danger of this country, and I disavowed the language of Lord Hawkesbury, that we had no reason to dread mischievous principles now, but only the force of France.

I must speak out. In war time often an honest man cannot, because he knows he will or may thereby do much public injury. Suppose him to see abuses. If by pointing them out he should without procuring a reform of them, lessen as far as his influence

may extend the estimation, attachment, and confidence, which difficult times and times of war . . for the energy of public counsels and the patient sustentation of unavoidable burthens . . render necessary to be had in government; will he not be injuring the public interests?

N. B. Again he may not approve of the mode in which the war is carried on, of the main principle pursued in it, yet if he knows that the war *must* be carried on, that the directors of public affairs are men of talents and knowledge far superior to his own, with means of information, as well as power of turning to account that information, which he does not possess, he is led to doubt whether he may not be wrong and they right; and he is sure of this, that by infusing a doubt concerning their conduct, he shall be weakening their hands at a time of war when general principles of established policy require that they should be strengthened. But suppose him even to remain convinced that his own views of the true mode of conducting the war are just and theirs are mistaken, yet if he knows that by publicly declaring them, he could not procure their adoption, what would he do? He would doubtless, if he had opportunity, endeavour to procure for the arguments in favour of his conclusions a fair and mature consideration. [Just tribute to be paid to Pitt's willingness to listen, and his candour and fairness in weighing the suggestions of understandings, he must know to be far inferior to his own.] But when this has been done, what remains for him, but if he cannot procure the adoption of the plan he would wish to see pursued, to endeavour to give effect to that which is preferred to it—not to thwart, not to impede, not to cripple.

All this is the part of a wise man, of a good subject, of an honest Englishman at all times. But if it be even generally and universally true, how much more is such a line of conduct enforced on us under such circumstances as those in which our country was placed during the last war! There was an opposition, able, vigilant, active, inveterate, powerful from their talents, formidable from their principles, not very scrupulous in their means, and bitter and uniform in their hostility, between whom and myself there

existed a difference not merely as to the mode of prosecuting a war of which we all recognised the necessity, but a fundamental difference as to the main principles not only of political conduct, but even of moral practice—in whom I thought I saw . . though neither in private nor in public did I ever impute to them that they were not really intending the good of the country, &c. . . that prejudice and passion had so blinded them that they could see nothing to be apprehended in those principles and proceedings, which appeared to me likely to sap the vitals of our country, and to produce an explosion in which the whole fabric of our political and social edifice were likely to be buried in one common ruin. If by stating my doubts as to the wisdom of our counsels and the prudence of our measures, I should strengthen the cause of a party like that, how could I have made amends for the mischief I might have done, while, as before alleged, I could not have effected the purpose I had myself in view?

Again, supposing me to believe that in the case of our military and naval establishments there was need of much alteration and reformation, ... allude to the impress of seamen—to the buying of commissions in our army, or rather to the not letting a certain number of commissions be bestowed on principles of merit—to the requisite care of our seamen's and soldiers' families in order to bind them to their country—to the means of preventing mutiny by multiplying the petty officers, (thus rendering the real British sailor a character of eminence and comfort,) whereby as is usual in other similar cases, (the clergy for instance,) honour is reflected on the whole body, and the rest are cheered under their hardships, and made to bear their labours and sufferings with alacrity in the hope of better days—in the assurance that in due time, they also shall arrive at the height of eminence to which they see many elevated, who were once no higher than themselves—to the not punishing abuses, and misconduct in executive servants, peculation, &c.—to the appointing to important situations, unfit persons on account of their families, connexions, &c. and thus breaking the hearts of those who can only hope to recommend themselves by a vigilant discharge of their official duties—to the abuses in the dock yards—to those in the hired vessels paid monthly—to the

abuses still more in our political and municipal economy—respecting the education of our people—respecting their moral improvement, &c.—to the corruptions in our judicial system—in our financial; duties on spirits, and other matters connected with the morals and comfort of our people—to the agriculture of the country and its improvements—to our colonial system, especially in the West Indies, &c. . . . . .

All these are general heads; but they may suffice to show the difficult situation in which an honest man is placed, when the country in difficulties. I appeal to Burke himself, &c.

Notes before or during debates.

Notes before Speech on the Slave Trade, May 12, 1789.

Introduction.
Propositions, humanity not sensibility.

Our witnesses, who.
Slaves, how made.
General reasoning.
General information.
Positive testimony.
Inferences from evidence, children, &c.
B. Edwards's quotation.
Frauds in trade, &c.

Their witnesses, who.
Prejudice expected, &c.
Af. me.*
Their assertions as to making slaves.
Pre. Af. me. Af. log. † J. Barnes's wine evidence.

Our witnesses.
Their witnesses.

General reasons and information.
Inference from evidence.

Otley and other West Indians.
Governor Parry, and letter.

Miles and Baggs.

Lyttleton, Law Anthropophagi.
African extortion, too much for fish, &c.

* African medium.

† African logic.

Recapitulation.
B. Edwards.
Rooke, &c. &c.
Foregone conclusions, &c.

Middle passage.
(Lloyd's List, &c.)
J. K. Wilson's evidence.
Claxton's ditto.
Opponents' Af. me. ideas.
Knox's, 333 to 120 tons.
450 to 108.
600 to 130—150.
yet comfort.

Suicides, and triumphing, &c.
Repellents denied, and infer.
Yam and hot coal.

Who these Africans are.
Europe, middle ages.
Opponents' inconsistencies.

Disadvantages of being black.

About labour, &c.

General wish and transition to West Indies.
Natural anger excited by indiscriminate charges of cruelty.

Main point at issue.
Statement of argument.

Slaves' general state, and inference.

Distinctions between general and particular.

Effects of absenteeship and man, which West Indians would themselves deplore.

Feeding, &c.
Medical care.
Legal protection.

Short feeding paper.

Savary detected. St. Kitt's records. Ross's fact. Suspension of law in Jamaica without ill consequences.

Moral and religious state.
Neglect of breeding. F.'s paper.

1. From their witnesses' confessions.
2. Witnesses' selection. Argt.
3. Admirals, governors, &c. Admirals—observation paper, Ross's evidence.

4. General reasoning. As happy as people in this country; not liable to be sold for debts, &c. Ross's evidence. Slaves don't wish to be free, or to return to Africa. (Funerals, &c.)
Prejudice proved, and W. I. me.*

5. Our witnesses' positive testimony.
Result, a degraded race.
Now rising, &c.
Decrease in fact very small, if any; even according to adversaries' own statement.
Population papers.
Dr. Anderson's assertion.

Proofs that slaves will increase.
1. Gradual and uniform reform begun.
2. Positive testimony (opponents' and our own) of increase.
3. Where one or two impediments removed, increase.
4. Males and females disproportion, and Creoles' and Africans' number.
Lastly, ship causes removed and native populousness, &c.

* West Indian medium.

Astley's Voyages, &c.
6. Tetanus, remedy.
7. Jamaica 2nd report; males to females proportion.
8. Dr. Anderson's assertion compared with Edwards's inequality.
7. Long's positions—old settled plantations increase, and proportion of produce to slaves, 3 to 2 Hhds.
8. Baillie's Hispaniola increase.
9. Dalling's domestic slaves.
10. Sir P. Gibbs.
11. Long's free blacks and mulattoes increasing very fast.
12. Americans and slaves.
13. Bencoolen increase.
14. Botany Bay increase.
15. Caribs increase.
16. Maroons ditto.
1749, 273 men, 211 women.
1733, declaration of their uncounteractable increase.

Notes before and during a debate, written on parallel columns on a large sheet of paper, apparently on Grey's Motion for Reform in Parliament.

EXORDIUM. Subject's importance. My idea when I first heard of *a* motion; but *the* motion removed my suspense. Delicacy of the subject.

Narration. Former motions for Reform, and new set of reformers started up—democrats.

Proposition. Whether the plan right at all, and if at all, whether now.

I. Not right at all. Grey's plan too bold. Unmixed interests, whereas rights various. We not a young country. One looks round for sure footing, and may rest on the ground of a few plain propositions.

1. When a country far advanced in political corruption, and public spirit languishing, it is generally advisable that power and property should go together as much as possible.

2. That executive government should be rather strengthened than weakened.

3. That changes should be made with infinite caution, and little at a time, because the stamina not sound.

4. Guard against being misled to ascribe to frame of government, what arising from personal depravity—bribery, &c.

Grey's plan militates against all these, therefore strong presumption against it. But what the chief arguments in its defence?

Parliament has sanctioned weak and wicked ministers, therefore wants reforming. But, 1. Country and parliament think alike. Country against reform. 2. This no argument to *us* who think ministers' measures neither weak nor wicked.

Malady and remedy both wrong. Party spirit vita. Seceding. Influence of Crown, &c.

But if plan right, time most improper, and why? Arguments answered. Reproach that this the common pretext; and arguments answered here also. Pitt's apostacy, and how hardly treated: not the slave of his own character. Misfortune not guilt.

But though both Grey's plan and time wrong, yet myself friendly to moderate reform at proper time.

True policy of this country to conciliate the honest. Moderate reform would not strengthen democrats' hands—but never hope to win the democrats. Ideal grievances and ideal advantages. Cry for liberty; but what they want is power.

Conc. Crown's influence excessive, and mischiefs here.

Grey wrong, both as to the nature of our national malady, and its cure. Party spirit vita. Seceding. Pitt says we have fared better than they who have taken an opposite course.

Grey argues from venality of parliament.

From misfortunes which have happened of late years.

From profuse expenditure of public money.

From treatment of government in Bank business.

Hence argues that too little connexion between elected and electors.

From that system the evils flowed, and the remedy obvious.

Grey wishes to preserve constitution entire; leaving county representation 113 for 92. Division into districts. 400 members according to certain proportion. Householders paying taxes. Expense prevented, and elections at same time.

Time argument. Economy necessary, &c. Home. Grey trusts what has passed in France now likely to tend to the diffusion of rational liberty, &c. Ireland. Grey argues for reform and conciliation, and a House of Commons possessing the confidence of the people.

Erskine conc. that wished to bring wanderers home to the true constitution, &c. &c. and of our classing all reformers together as Jacobins.

Misfortunes no proof of guilt or folly. In what a state have we been! All stormy and dark, &c. and then a party within endeavouring to prevent, &c. &c..

Middle man's state——a heavy heart, &c. I would listen with candour, &c.

Too much government influence, &c.

Unfairness of Pitt's being reproached for apostacy, and that I respect him more for daring to be singular; not being the slave of his own reputation. They who bite respect him, and wish they could attain to the same magnanimity. Despising the venom of malice, and misconstruction, and the shafts of calumny.

Effect of Grey's plan . . to throw power into popular hands . . would not exclude monied men. Speaks of situation of elected and electors.

Of taking away rights of election from all existing cities and boroughs.

Roman State ruined by voting by tribes and centuries.

The nation adverse to Reform.

Malady and remedy. What the real state. We talk of this country as if fresh, &c. Party spirit and faction, &c.

Exposing himself to insult and obloquy, &c. Despairs of doing aught, &c. Of seceding, &c. . . a proof of party spirit. . . True love would watch, &c. Suffereth long and is kind, &c. Would it desert its country at a time like this? Slave trade instance. How have I acted; how *ought* I to act?

Erskine. If Pitt sowed the seeds by beginning Reform; what does Erskine now?

Pitt. The same reason which makes me condemn Grey's, makes me love moderate reform: Grey's would enable democrats to carry their point; moderation would prevent them.

Malady and cure. Grey has some hankering after French principles.

Burdett. This war an attempt to crush the rising liberties of mankind.

If the people properly represented, the war never would

have happened, &c. Liberty, &c. Toasts, Bastiles of Ireland.

Hawkesbury. Close boroughs just as well, &c. &c.

Sheridan would prefer universal suffrage to the present system of parliaments.

Sheridan denies that the French principles produced the French disorders, &c.

Sheridan believes Grey's plan of Reform better than universal suffrage, which yet he says he argued (with annual parliaments) to be the unalienable rights of man.

Hawkesbury. Can you show that close boroughs worse than others? Can you show that bribery bad? Are the people who bribe worse than those who do not?

Fox. Party feelings. Perseverance.

Vid. page 9.

Parliamentary Reform.

Two ways of reasoning concerning the constitution and election of the House of Commons; the one that of studying to exclude bribery and all illegitimate motives for giving votes; the other dismissing all concern as to the manner in which the members chosen, and reasoning from the state of the House of Commons such as it is when elected;——this the expediency gentlemen's system. This last system has this grand vice inherent in it, that national morals of no account whatever in it.

Their importance, Dila.*

The only just principle in electing members of parliament is, strictly speaking, that of deciding and voting for, or assisting (with influence, &c.) the person we believe it most conducive to national welfare should be elected. The intervention of the idea of the voter's interest being promoted in any way, utterly excluded; advice indeed may be given, but all influence,—as landlords over tenants, party influence, interest, all personal affection, friendship, &c. excluded. Still some illegitimate motives worse than others, both in their own nature and in their effects .... consider the degree of their prevalence——friendship, &c. cannot extend far; not so bad as desire of personal profit. . .

* Dilate.

Paley's system vicious, because leaving such broad blots so palpably condemned by all principle, as to afford advantage to designing men,—calumniators of constitution, &c. Hereby esteem impaired, admiration done away, affection cooled, and men, who are actually suffering from various causes, naturally led to refer their sufferings to this cause, which so manifestly indefensible on constitutional grounds and principles.

Nothing so dangerous as for a great, but somewhat blind affection, which perhaps imbibed in the cradle, to be successfully attacked. The man's pride takes the alarm when palpable faults discovered in that which was before deemed all beauty and excellence.

Many boroughs now, where interest (often family interest) must either be at once abandoned, or maintained by the most unjustifiable means. How wrong to reverse the Divine procedure, and make duty and interest incompatible!

On the importance of legislative measures for promoting public morals.

MORALS' importance to a state; whether in relation to personal happiness the great end of all government, or to national strength and prosperity——internal peace, &c.

A community is made up of individuals, and generally it cannot be denied that to be virtuous is to be happy; but if this be true of all mankind, how peculiarly so in the lower orders which constitute the bulk of every community! Among them the question is not merely between the soul's calm sunshine, the peace within, the moderated desires and unruffled comforts, the calm survey of the past and anticipation of the future, compared with short deliriums of pleasure too dearly purchased by the misery of ungoverned passions, by a self-accusing conscience, and the consciousness of abused advantages . . while in every face the man reads a condemnation of his conduct . . which when he looks within is confirmed by the reproaches of his mind . . but

Immorality in the lower and even middling classes leads directly to temporal ruin; and while as in the higher classes all the comforts of virtue are forfeited, and all the disquietudes of vice incurred, there is superadded the suffering arising from the loss of hope, the declining condition of life, family jars and discord, bodily health ruined——too naturally leading to the violation of the laws of the land.

Consider in the case of every class, what is given up of pleasure, and what is incurred of pain.

Let it be remembered that the bulk of mankind must maintain themselves by their own efforts; consequently, that industry, sobriety, punctuality, temperance, health, regularity, are virtues necessary to their living in any tolerable enjoyment of the comforts of life.

Take a man whose irregularities and excesses render his home a scene of self-reproach and discord, and he is in a fine state of preparation for becoming an ale-house politician—a tool of faction. Our natural proneness to acquit ourselves and lay blame on others, disposes men to charge on the conduct of their rulers, or the institutions of their country, those sufferings which flow from their own imprudence, folly, or vices. He complains perhaps of the tax-gatherer, when it is from his indolence that the means of paying his taxes are wanting. In the resorts of dissipation and vice he finds also comrades of a similar stamp. He loses by degrees a sense of those domestic pleasures, with the actual enjoyment of which his vicious habits are incompatible. He has no fire-side comforts, no little ones or faithful partner to look up to him with gratitude and affection.

These best pleasures of our nature the Almighty has put within the reach of the poor no less than the rich, as in the natural world the best things are the most common.

How little then is it true humanity to strew temptation in the way; to multiply inducements to idleness, dissipation, and vice; to draw into and encourage those smaller deviations and transgressions which infallibly lead to fatal consequences, and bring on a train of vicious habits and sufferings, while all the virtues with their attendant comforts fly away to seek an asylum in the cottages of the sober and industrious!

How much more criminal this in the legislature, which should watch over the welfare of the state, and guard with peculiar care the rights and comforts of the poor!

Are not these truths indisputable? And if so, what cruel mockery is it for enlightened men to pretend to be pleading the cause and promoting the interests of the lower orders,

when contending against the checks to idleness, dissipation, and vice, and for multiplying the means and increasing the facilities of giving into illicit gratifications! Does it not argue an utter contempt for the comforts of those very people for whose interests they affect to feel?

How criminal then must be the legislature, whose duty it is to watch over the happiness of the people, when it not only neglects its office, but even assumes the directly opposite course, and tempts those very persons it should restrain! There is a selfishness also in this, since we should not tempt to vices which were immediately injurious to ourselves; yet like all selfishness it is short-sighted, for it soon reaches us after destroying the family comforts of the sufferer:

For the dissipated, vicious man is almost sure to be disaffected. Think then of the difference between having a hardy, contented, domestic people, eager to defend their wives and families, in the place of a set of discontented, factious men, to whom any change would be gain, and whose natural habits prompt them to take the side of licence and misrule against law and order.

The legislators of antiquity were so deeply impressed with all these truths, that it was their deepest study, and primary aim, to preserve from deterioration the public morals.

All this observe is true of morals independently of religion, but religion is also indispensably necessary, and religion is destroyed on the one hand by loose morals, just as, on the other, where religion declines the morals will be infallibly corrupted.

Sanction of oaths, property, person, life, honour, depend on them; the very cement that compacts society together.

Romans' care to cherish religion.

But the truth is, cases will often arise in which the present temptation will be so strong, (importunate,) the immediate interest or gain so powerful, the chance of detection so small,

that the virtue of most men would give way, unless sustained by the consciousness of an invisible Spectator. What check remains, if the man is not aware that though removed from every human eye he is still in the presence of a Being who witnesses his most secret conduct, and who both can and will call him to account for actions which may escape and elude all human observation? It is the habitual effect of this restraint which strengthens the moral principle, and the force of this restraint in each particular instance is greater or less according to the power of habit. Release a man then from this habitual restraint, and you prepare him at once for every degree of perfidy and crime, without fear or remorse, without pity or compunction.

Morals necessary above all for a free country. The slaves of a despot may be kept in subjection by fear; but a free country can only be safe from without—as it can alone be at peace within—while it is sustained by the zealous attachment, and affectionate and patriotic loyalty of its people.

The degree of liberty every man possesses will make him the master of his own actions, and factions will spring up, and liberty will be corrupted into licentiousness.

The necessity of religion among the bulk of the people, i. e. the lower orders, is the greater, because that great principle of honour which it would scarcely be too strong to term the religion of the higher orders does not exist among them. Consider then what the former would be without the restraint of honour, and estimate what the latter without religion.

The immoral man cannot be a good citizen, because not a happy man. The unhappy wish for change, and impute to their government the distresses which flow from their own vices or imprudence.

Though the doctrine unpopular, I am always disposed to call in private character and conduct to elucidate the motives of public.

On party principles.

Our duty to condemn the first open avowal of these shameless principles, to denounce them as public enemies, to raise the hue-and-cry as it were of the country against them as common enemies to the peace and order of civil society.

Nature of these principles.—Though they affect a deep and philosophical origin, they are in reality base in their extraction, mean, and low, and sordid in their nature, as they are mischievous in their tendency and operation. They reject all that has been hitherto respected or admired for its sanctity or excellence, or beloved for its amiableness. It is indeed the sentiment of a shopkeeping nation, reducing all to profit and loss, tare and tret; taking the ledger for its book of ethics and Cocker's Arithmetic for Tully's Offices—moral code, &c.

These principles are opposed by all that ever was respected among men, whether of ancients or moderns, till a new sect in our days; even by Machiavel.

How inconsistent to talk of national character, if by character any thing more is meant than being reputed a shrewd, selfish, politic, and powerful people! If used in a higher sense by this school, it can only be in the sense of Colonel Charters in Pope.

If from considering the nature of party we proceed to inquire into its effects, they will be found pernicious beyond all measure, sapping the foundations of our greatness and our glory, of our

strength, our energies, our eternal happiness and comfort; and if we follow them out into private life they would poison all its charities, &c. The life of such a man must be a mere calculation of interest, a game of profit and loss, &c. Dila.

I know its application to private life will be disclaimed, but how can it be prevented? The very constitution of the world is such that neither nations nor individuals can have several different sets of principles, to each of which they can assign that degree of acceptance which they wish; having a set of selfish principles for their own use in public life and transactions, but thinking to have another set for private and domestic currency —paying in counters and receiving in gold.

One of the greatest uses and most important benefits of the two Houses is, that they are, if the expression may be allowed, the moral mint of the nation, in which moral and political principles receive their stamp and currency. Whatever is recognised here as a legitimate principle of conduct gradually pervades the whole, descending through all the insensibly diminishing scale of our mixed society—hence danger from false principles and duty of repelling them.

In cases where it is difficult to escape the influence of party bias, or . . to leave out that contentious word . . to prevent or allow for the effect of personal attachment, what so desirable as to shift our ground, and to watch the effects of the causes and principles which are in dispute in the history of other times and countries? Try this in the present case and we shall be at no loss as to our conclusions. Carthage, Greece, Rome.

Parties more excusable where some broad, intelligible ground of difference, as contested succession—where nothing of this kind, the suspicion infuses itself generally and gains ground much beyond the truth, that the one set being out of office, and the other in it, is the sole ground and principle of dissension and of union.

Party. Association natural, but where truth is the object, and where it is difficult to develope it in complicated and there-

fore doubtful concerns, where the passions also are likely to disturb the functions of the understanding—if men wished to come to a true conclusion one would think they would strive to banish all needless connexions and associations; that they might more clearly see, and more simply follow, the dictates of their understanding. This more necessary on account of the difficulty and complication . . and therefore room for error . . in politics.

What stronger proof can be afforded of the effect of party spirit upon the judgments of men, than that on subjects so difficult and complicated, where therefore there is room for great diversity of opinion, all on the same side agree exactly, and yet always differ from administration, all of whom likewise agree? This extends even to questions of law. How different this from cases where men speculate without prejudice in their closets on the transactions and events of life! Historians, moralists, &c.

Let me be forgiven for strong language against party; it is achieving the ruin of our country. A nation so great, rich, populous, above all free and spirited, like this, never can be conquered from without, unless the foreign assailant be aided by some internal principle of corruption, which, however unintentionally, does practically co-operate with him, and tend to the same effect.—This true even of the smaller states, the Grecian republics.

We know that parties will always exist in a free state, but need we therefore endeavour to cherish and encourage them, to exasperate their fury and increase their force? The human body must be often the victim of diseases, but should we therefore promote and multiply them? Vices and follies and weaknesses belong to man, but is not that alleged rather as a motive for resisting or extirpating—or at least for palliating and excusing them? Do we glory in them, and make them our pride and boast?

I am the more disposed to support government always when not wrong, because otherwise how would it be possible for

government to go on without corruption, if all opposed and none supported independently?

It is not that men mean to act contrary to their country's welfare, but the extreme complication, uncertainty, and consequent difficulty of political things, not so much in discovering true principles as in applying them, renders self-deception the most easy of all processes. We know how love and friendship can blind the judgment and warp the view; how much more then when friendship, and preference, and ambition, and interest, and hostility, and a sense of injuries, and a spirit of rivalry, and various others, all combine.

Take an inference from lawyers. The most eminent acknowledge they almost always think their own cause right.

But the decisive proof is the different judgments formed by lawyers before they have taken their side, at least before their passions are sharpened by contention, and their judgment warped. How differently do different lawyers advise; yet how much more might conformity be expected here than in politics, where we often have to calculate on uncertain data, to proceed on mere contingencies, and to argue from facts which are perhaps wholly disputable!

Length to which party principle has now gone openly avowed—and consequences.

How are we to know what is and what is not a party question? He is the best party man who is the most steady, and unqualified, and indiscriminate in his support; and when party is gloried in, this is a distinction for many to covet.

Great difficulty of political questions—if we will deal fairly with our understandings we must acknowledge it, on account of their complicated nature and numerous relations, also because the result involves a number of contingencies, of events which by happening one way or another produce the whole issue, and turn into discomfiture and ruin plans the most wisely devised, and executed with the most consummate ability.

What stronger proof, than that the ablest men, of the greatest talents, knowledge, and experience, often differ fundamentally; not in one or two instances only, but in every instance for years together?

If men are not aware of the probable influence of this bias over them, they are so much the more likely to be blindly governed by it.

The first manifest effect of party is that half the talents, not to say all the talents, of the country, are employed in thwarting and opposing, instead of promoting, public measures.

This especially mischievous in times of difficulty and danger, when every hand and heart required for common defence, when every effort should be used to expel sloth and kindle zeal, when one would wish to make the people forget and lose sight of all the blemishes of the government, that they might be the more forward to defend it. (Dilate here.) Under these circumstances half are employed in the very contrary operations; in searching out blemishes, in aggravating spots, in exaggerating evils, in trying to persuade the people they are oppressed and unhappy. Thus public spirit extinguished.

Will it be said that not the country, but its government, is present to the gross feelings of the bulk of people—these are identical, it is the whole of their situation, without nicely discriminating from what each particular arises, which produces the effect?

Thus half the people are employed in the very service which the worst enemies of the country would be glad to hire agents to effect—in fomenting discontent, in damping ardour, in checking public spirit.

We are now so used to this that not surprised at it, and when a ministry is turned out, we now expect them naturally to take the opposite seats the next day. We can calculate on the effects of being in or out of office, as well as on the productions of a particular soil or climate.

Ministry's interest the same as their country's; opposition's *contra* to a great extent. They would not indeed wish any irreparable injury, but can they deny that they would wish expeditions to fail, and ministers to be every where discredited? They must wish this, if faithful even to their own reasonings; but there is something surer and more powerful than reason to produce this effect, viz. the strongest passions of the soul—love, hatred, ambition, the love of glory, and the fear of shame.

One of the worst fruits of party spirit and of a systematic opposition is, that it renders necessary, and therefore almost justifies, corruption. The evil here unspeakable—gradually diffusing itself and corrupting the whole community.

Party creates and diffuses a false moral system, provides the means of reputation and acceptance for men not entitled to it by their real merits, provides an amnesty for every crime—staunch zeal for the party excuses all, defends all, heals all, justifies all.

Evils of party spirit in public, but far more in private life.

The real use of an opposition is lost and discredited by this gross abuse and indiscriminate application of it.

In times so difficult and dangerous as ours, it can scarcely be possible that any plan can be proposed which, if it succeeds, would be extensively beneficial, against which many plausible objections, &c. might not be urged. A choice of evils is commonly all that is now left to us; the relations of every measure are so numerous and diversified from the complicated nature and parts of our political society.

Of how many beneficial plans are we now deprived by its being known that it will be easy to render them unpopular: it too naturally becomes the object of a government to get through its business quietly, and, if they can, escape censure, not to be very solicitous to obtain praise: to be safe becomes their grand object.

Combinations of men will do what individuals would have abhorred.

A party man no more questions a leader's right than a soldier his prince's.

In proportion as the country's difficulties and dangers increase, party commonly more active and clamorous, because more hope of driving out opponents. Thus we are most divided when we should be most united. (Dila.)

Parliament degraded by the languor with which public interests treated, compared with the animation called forth by petty party and personal squabbles.

The people think worse of us even than we deserve

——by the invariable contrariety of opinions, &c. of the two parties—in law and arithmetic as well as in politics.

——by rash declarations made by opposition, afterwards forgotten, &c.

——by the squabblings and bickerings of which the public tired—the public spirit and feeling of the country being so disgusted and exhausted as scarce again to be capable of resuscitation.

——by the acceptance of the most doubtful public servants, and the detracting from the best.

Parliament's time and attention, much more administration's, wasted on frivolous objects in the most critical times.

Projects, measures, &c. withheld both by administration and opposition, and neutral men. Here the sum of loss scarcely to be estimated.

Above all, an excuse for corruption furnished.

The check of public opinion in appointments, &c. annulled, and an excuse provided for incapacity and unfitness.

The effects of a generous emulation throughout the whole

community destroyed, and a worse principle, obsequiousness and blind party zeal, substituted in its place; and moral principle weakened.

Public men less circumspect in their conduct—knowing that no innocence or merit can exempt from censure of opponents, and no misconduct preclude the defence of their own party. The party principle becoming the point of honour, the grand governing law where religion is defective, may in time sanction the most gross deviations from good morals; may find its way into our courts of justice, &c. and triumph over the weakness and futility of oaths. We now see oaths disregarded where not disgraceful. Custom-House qualification, &c.

The moral sensibility of party men gradually impaired by the habit of referring all to the party principle.

Party ever in extremes; a stranger to that moderation which becomes human weakness and ignorance.

Party's effect on the King pernicious, produces contempt for patriotism.

Party's growth in our law courts favoured by so many lawyers being in parliament.

Even party attachments cannot claim the dignity of true friendship and affection.

A party-divided country invites foreign attack. Duke of Argyle's letter from the old Pretender, 1744. French Play, 1793—Invasion of England.

Historians' remarks on party's effects on the fall of Greece, Rome, &c. Absurdity of supposing we can have all the good without the evil. Adam Smith's human nature presumption.

Peroration. Vita party. I hate it just in proportion as I love my country.

Notes before meeting for erecting a monument to H. R. H. the Duke of Kent.

THAT high rank is not a property, but a trust, is a truth suggested by reason, confirmed by revelation, and, as we Britons should own with gratitude, inculcated on us by our invaluable constitution: for this regulated spirit of liberty teaches us that all the various stations in society have their several appropriate duties, so that the diversities of each is intended for the benefit of the others, and the common good of all.

But this, alas! is a truth we are all sadly apt to forget, all ranks of us;—for it may be equally forgotten by the poor man's forgetting his appropriate duties, which are no less honourable in the sight of God because they derive their importance from the motive which dignifies them, and are productive of that moral improvement which is the object of the faculties of all classes.

The higher classes under greater temptations to forget it, and the more to be pitied on this account.

When therefore we find an eminent instance of the remembrance and performance of this duty of station, we should remark and applaud it, and point it out to others, as marshalling their path to true honour and glory.

Sympathizing with those who think the Duke of Kent emi-

nently distinguished himself, I came to pay my tribute of respect, admiration, and gratitude.

Princes of the blood awkwardly circumstanced in all countries. In despotisms, apt to form rebellions; or, in order to extinguish jealousy, they retire from observation. Some of them have struck out paths to eminence. [Prince John of Portugal.] But commonly waste life in sensualities. Truth, and the Divine ordination of things, will not let me call them pleasures.

Even here, princes in difficult and embarrassing circumstances. But here, shall I say the instincts of the heart, and not rather the lessons of heavenly wisdom, have led our princes for the first time to strike out for themselves a road, which has now become well worn with many tracks on it, all in the same direction, and all leading alike to esteem, public benefit, and individual comfort.

Public benefits also result. Glare of royalty softened; attachment to royal family confirmed; and new benefits manifested in the British constitution.

Objects in view—to point out to imitation, stimulants, &c.

Thoughts previous to a speech at a Missionary Society.

It may justly be regarded as a signal instance of the Divine benevolence, that it has pleased God to render true religion not only the means of securing our future and everlasting happiness, but also of rescuing mankind from many great and present evils which are found to prevail in all countries which are strangers to Divine revelation. Now this is not the case with regard to our bodily diseases: there the road to health is commonly by nauseous, painful, disgusting, wearisome proceedings; but He who made us, and in dealing with us mixed so much mercy with His justice, doubtless meant thereby to furnish men with additional motives, both for receiving the Divine testimony and diffusing it among others of their fellow-creatures. This was not necessary with respect to bodily diseases; for there the natural solicitude and earnest desire of health and freedom from pain and preservation of existence, are so strong, that men will submit for them to the severest discipline: but had the same painful courses been found in the necessary path to spiritual health and vigour, alas! how would the difficulty and obstacles to the reception of true religion have been multiplied, and their force augmented! Whereas the temporal blessings which Christianity brings along with it, and scatters with a lavish hand as it directs its beneficent course over the earth, are quite a premium as it were on their admission; so that in the very instances which might be alleged as marks of the Di-

vine severity and vengeance, we find fresh proofs of His beneficence and love. He leaves men to fall into those depths of vice, and misery, and degradation which are the consequences of their own departure from Him, but He does it that these very evils may serve as the many motives for prompting them to receive the gracious intimations of mercy, by the acceptance of which they will not only secure their escape from future sufferings, but immediate blessings, and deliverances from the greatest of the social and domestic evils they endure.

And as if for the very purpose of preventing men's conceiving that they might find in civilization, and in humanity, an abundant cure for all the diseases of their nature, we find that all the polished nations, both of the ancient and modern world, that have been strangers to Christianity, have been sunk in depths of vice too shocking for specification, and that this vice has been attended with at least an equal amount of misery. There is a uniformity also in the state of this civilized, but utterly unchristianized, country;* which, while it is indicative of a common source of evil, favours also the supposition of a common ultimate purpose of good. Infanticide, besides horrors unutterable—debased condition of the whole female sex, and ferocity in war.

While we congratulate each other on the formation and success of our Society, we must express our wonder at its being so late in coming forward,—for Christ's command strong and unlimited; and there was every motive to encourage missionary attempts, that could be found in the wretched state of men, both barbarous [dila] and polished [dila]. Infidels indeed have related wonders of the purity, as well as virtuous knowledge, of various unchristianized countries; as the Chinese, Hindoos, &c.; but on closer inspection, this always found fallacious.

We see cause to adore God's goodness, in rendering Christianity thus medicinal to the bodies, to the temporal as well as the spiritual state of men.

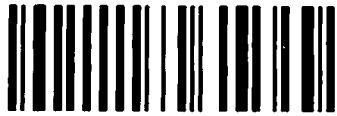
* The meeting had reference probably to India.

Also in forbidding them light and happiness from mere civilization.

Let us then advance with increased alacrity. We are too apt to be discouraged. Does not experience warrant our warmest hopes? What if others formerly had been as desponding?

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